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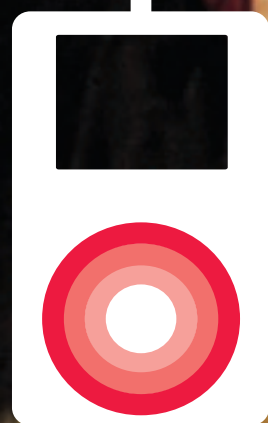
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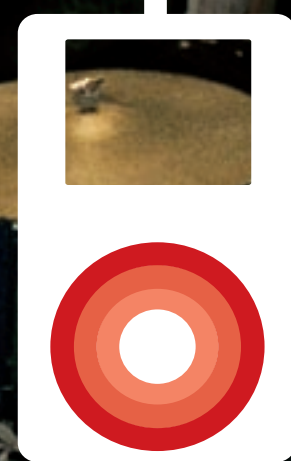
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ED'S RANT CITY SALUTATION



Photo of Times Square: Christopher Woodcock

My first visit to New York was in 1989 for the CMJ Music Marathon. I was a wide-eyed college radio broadcaster and *Urb Magazine* contributor at the time. I only had two goals for my trip to New York: see Unsane live and skate the Brooklyn Banks. Sheer luck put the conference in some fancy hotel attached to the (then intact) World Trade Center, an easy session away from some of the sickest concrete street spots in lower Manhattan.

Unsane played a hellaciously loud set at the Lismar Lounge on 1st Avenue—a tiny basement bar in the East Village (that's now undoubtedly home to another dank basement bar with equally noisy NY bands playing). I ended up shopping for dancehall records on Nostrand Avenue in Brooklyn, and later that night witnessed the first American appearance of Pakistani Qawwali singer Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan. To put it mildly, New York blew my wig.

I suppose a lot of my musical energy was focused on that city at the time. I indulged liberally in the saxophone elegies of Albert Ayler, was absorbed with Brooklyn sound system crews like Afrique and King Addies' and pounded my cerebral cortex with a maximum number of ultra-loud Wharton Tiers-produced artists (Cop Shoot Cop, Missing Foundation, Dust Devils, et al). I was firmly in a New York state of mind, which makes it easy for me to imagine the magnetic forces that are always drawing ever more eager young things to its drab concrete, pale street lamps and party-around-any-given-corner electricity.

It's this grab-you-by-the-throat energy that we're exploring in this issue of *XLR8R*, but also the landscape of a new city, a changed city. New York is as debauched and free-spirited as it always will be, but a cautiousness lurks beneath the surface, and many inhabitants have a verbal or literal tire iron at the ready to defend themselves should anything look amiss.

New York is also home to the “opinion.” It's where America looks for the decisive answer, especially when it comes to music and culture. We hope you New Yorkers and non-natives come away with your own ideas from this batch of profiles. And if you don't—*eh, that's your problem, buddy!*

-Tomas Palermo, Editor



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ON THE COVER: Illustration by Doug Lee; (top to bottom): Beans, Justine D, Masta Ace, Chantal from Morningwood and James Murphy; original photos by Jessica Miller (all but Murphy) and Kareem Black

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LOVELY AMBER LOVED THAT BOY STINKY PINKY MALLOY
BUT PINKY LOVED MIRROR BALL JANE.

AMBER TOLD PINKY, AFTER SOME DRINKY
SHE WANTED TO PLEASE HIS MAIN VEIN.

BUT MIRROR BALL WAS WAITING, AFTER ICE-SKATING,
STANDING BEHIND THE TREE,

AND WITH ONE SWING OF HER SKATE,
SHARPENED WITH HATE, MIRROR CUT PINKY FREE.

DARK TALES
ONLY TO READ AT HOME



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1. DOUG LEE

Doug Lee was born in the mid-'70s in a disco, and hasn't really found his way out since then. It's not his fault he has star filters embedded in his eyes and sees things in soft focus. Many people have tried to tell him the disco fantasy is over but he just looks at them with a hazy blank stare. But seriously, Doug wrote the book on streetstyle professionalism, and he works 24-7 as a NY designer/DJ/musician, unearthing the eccentricities of eras forgotten. You may write to him with your queries at doug@brandnewschool.com (and check out the cover illustration while you're at it-Ed.).

2. MELANIE SAMARASINGHE

The *XLR8R* posse bids a fond farewell to the most excellent Melanie Samarasinghe after four years of slamming ad sales work and fashion editorial contributions. Mels Bells, as we called her, played a major role in the recent growth of this magazine and yet always knew how to keep it locked and loaded on the path of righteousness. All hail Ms. Mels and good luck *Spin*-ning off into the future!

3. FAILE

Faile is an art and design group based out of New York made up of three artists. They are best known for their urban street poster art, retina-burning graphic design and fashion work. This summer, they are releasing their second book, *Lavender*, which will feature work from over 25 artists from around the world. Faile illustrated G. Rizzo in this issue. See more of Faile at www.faile.net.

4. DANA ZIELINSKY

Dana is a recent NYU graduate, living in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. She's been shooting environmental portraits for the past three years, but these are her first snaps for *XLR8R*. She currently lives with her best friend (pictured, right) and her cat, Suki (not pictured), and while she loves New York, she secretly lusts after California. "I'm a beach bum at heart," she whispers conspiratorially. Dana shot Adam X (NY Techno) and Supreme in this issue.

5. DESIREE ZONDAG

To list everything cool Desiree does would take us 10 pages, but here's a short primer. She's styled for *Lodown*, *Swindle* and *Nylon*, designed this fall's mens collection for Staple and collaborated with Faile on one-of-a-kind fashion pieces and Nike's Re-construct project. Currently, she's co-designing a line called Knights of the Vampire Killers with the guys from Rockers NYC and tending bar at Max Fish. Desiree styled *Badlands* in this issue.

6. MATT OWENS

Matt Owens is the principle of Brooklyn-based design studio Volumeone. Established in 1997, Volumeone brings a multi-disciplinary approach to the creation of visual solutions for print, motion and digital media. The experimental portion of volumeone.com is updated several times a year, featuring conceptual narratives and personal visual work. Matt is also a partner in The Riviera (seeouattheriviera.com), a small gallery in Brooklyn that focuses on up-and-coming artists, designers and photographers. He illustrated Nina Sky for this issue.

7. BOOGIE

Boogie was born and raised in Belgrade, Serbia, and moved to New York in 1998, after experiencing and documenting the turmoil of the Milosevic years. "You can put me in front of the most beautiful landscape there is," he says, "and I know there is a beauty there, but I just can't see it or feel it. I'm a city kid-I feel the pulse of the streets. My subjects can sense that, and maybe that is the reason why they usually trust me." Boogie shot Queensbridge Houses for this issue. Check out more at www.artcoup.com

8. ABE BURMEISTER

Abe Burmeister is a New Yorker. He makes art under the name William Blaze. An evil computer recently ate him and spit him out; you'll see him above-a little pixelated but none the worse for wear. Burmeister crafted the city guide in this issue. Find out more at www.abstractdynamics.org.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Like us? Hate us? Write us! Email letters to letters@xlr8r.com or send mail to XLR8R Magazine 1388 Haight Street #105 San Francisco, CA 94117. All letters printed "as is."

have completely inspired me to spend way too much of my hard earned I.T. cash and search the web for those rare recordings. My Excel spreadsheet of "wants" (29 pages) and my Amazon want list (33 pages) are out of control. I both love and hate seeing your colorful mag in my mailbox.
Buki Wilson

AND THE BAND PLAYED ON

Just writing in response to a letter entitled "Bland Buffet" from the August issue (#79). A fellow reader wrote in accusing the Pittsburgh, PA-based underground rap duo Grand Buffet for jumping on a political bandwagon. She later called them failed punkers trying to do hip-hop now. Such an uninformed response to your mag's coverage of their *Pittsburgh Hearts* CD, and the band in general, was pretty weak. Say what you will about Grand Buffet, but they're anything but bland. I've been following these guys for years and am never disappointed by a release or a show. Just because they're voicing their opinion in these highly politically charged times doesn't mean they're jumping any bandwagons. Even their first hip-hop release back in 1996 has some politically inspired material. And despite the political rants and raves, these guys truly are hilarious, dynamic, skilled and unabashedly absurd. And, yes, Grand Buffet, much like the Beasties back in the day, do have roots in rock and punk, most notably supporting the late great Wesley Willis on his final tour. Grand Buffet has

HUGS & KISSES

I do not know what I would do without you folks. I will not bore you with my music magazine history, but through the 13 years I have been reading them, I have had evolving tastes, firmly landing in the electronic genre. Can't even remember when it was, but my urban socialite friend (worked on assorted Platform shows) in San Francisco, handed me a copy of your mag and demanded that I scour it for cool new music. From those days on, I have been addicted. From the articles to the brilliant reviews, your pages

been in it for the long haul and their time is due! In a perfect world, everyone would be rocking this music on their sound systems.
Peace,
Steve Loya

NOCTURNAL OMISSION

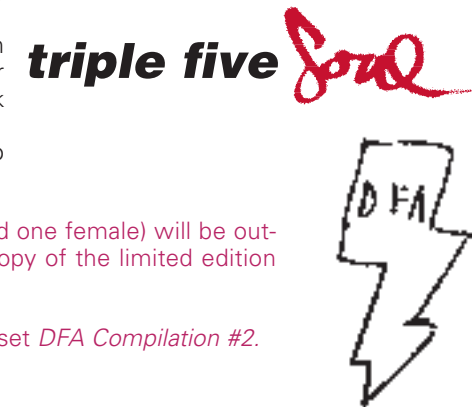
Your August issue (#79) was, as usual, superb, especially the illuminating profile of the Kompakt empire. But there was a glaring omission in your "25 Best Independent Labels" list. How could you overlook Background Records (and its sub-label a Touch of Class), which has recently issued superb material from The Repeat Orchestra (*The Original Dimensions*), Warmdesk (*Safety First*), and Portable (whose 2003 "Cycling" was one of the year's most distinguished releases)?
Ron Scheppler

Tomas replies:

Dear Ron,
You're right. Background is a great label... when I can find their releases. But seriously, there were dozens of labels we woulda/shoulda/coulda included, and I'm sure if we had polled our readers we would have had a huge list beyond what we compiled. The "Best Labels" of the year are amassed from our non-scientific observations of what we at *XLR8R* HQ like and are listening to throughout the year. We only had five repeats from last year's list, which means next year Background could make the cut! That is, if I can ever find their releases...

XLR8R'S "I LOVE NY" CONTEST WIN FRESH TRIPLE 5 SOUL AND DFA STUFF!

Triple 5 Soul was born in 1989 at a storefront on 151 Ludlow Street in the dirty dirty (that is, the Lower East Side). They quickly blew up the spot with their signature hand-sewn hoodies and velour tracksuits, prompting visits to the store from Christian Lacroix, Slick Rick and Fab 5 Freddy from *Yo! MTV Raps*. But the fun didn't stop there, and now nearly every New Yorker under the age of 30 has at least one piece of Triple 5's streetwise, utilitarian wear hanging in their closet. Triple 5 has long had a connection to music as well, and has just launched a collaborative, seasonal CD series called **T5 Soul Sessions**. The premier edition is a personal mixtape from blip-hop innovator **Prefuse 73**, which includes Spanish and Brazilian rarities and exclusive dubplates from his vaults.
Not to be outdone, the prolific **DFA label** is poised to launch **DFA Compilation #2** on November 2. The second installment from this wildly popular cutting-edge dancefloor emporium is a three-CD set that collects 12" versions and unreleased tracks from Black Dice, LCD Soundsystem, The Rapture, The Juan Maclean and more.
To celebrate our NY issue, we're giving away outfits and music to seven lucky winners. To win, write us a haiku about New York, and we'll pick the best and sauciest out of the pile.

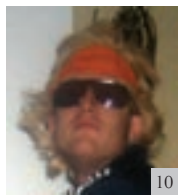
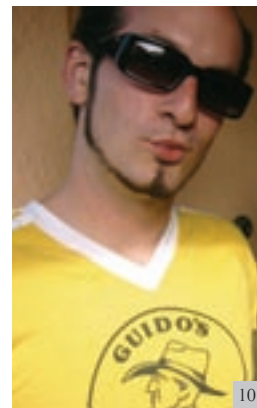


Entries will be accepted via mail and email. Send your haikus to XLR8R's "I Love NY" contest, 1388 Haight St., #105, San Francisco, CA 94117 or email them to contest@xlr8r.com. Include your name, return address and email address when you enter. Entries must be received by October 29, 2004.

TWO GRAND PRIZE WINNERS (one male and one female) will be outfitted in Triple 5 Soul gear and will receive a copy of the limited edition *T5 Soul Sessions Prefuse 73 CD*.
FIVE RUNNERS-UP will receive triple-CD box set *DFA Compilation #2*.



I (NOT) HEART NEW YORK



It's so passé to hate on Los Angeles. I mean, really...New York is just as annoying and about 100 times more x-treme. Plus, ranting about New York pisses off all hippie, dirty, UFO-pants-wearing, dorky raver fucks who recently moved there and shed their old life like a lizard skin. They read stuff like this and squinch their faces up like constipated hamsters and it makes us laugh. Even though we love New York (see this issue), we can't help hating it at the same time.

1. Fashion hype: Dear god, the pressure of having to wear hot pink cowboy boots, a military cap and listen to The Strokes one week, then have skull tattoos, a bright yellow tube top and play obscure 1979 No Wave on your iPod the next is enough to make your head explode. It's like high school, but on such a grand scale and moving with such a mind-numbing swiftness that you can't separate the cool kids from the dweebs.

2. Getting from one part of Brooklyn to another: Okay, the subway is a rad invention, but what's up with having to go all the way back into Manhattan to go from one part of Brooklyn to another? That's just shit. Utter shit.

3. Swamp pits: What you get under your arms in the summer, ten minutes after stepping out of your rat hole apartment, due to the humidity, dirt and flecks of bubonic plague coming off the rats.

4. Industry talk: It's 4 a.m. and you've had a few drinks and a few lines of coke and you're having a

good time. Invariably, you will end up getting your ear talked off by someone spouting industry bullshit. Model booker, journalist, press person, MTV intern... it doesn't matter. It will totally kill your mojo.

5. Times Square: Is such a boring tourist destination that Iowans go there and then immediately wish they were back home watching the corn grow.

6. Smells: You haven't smelled anything like Chinatown at 7 p.m. after a long day of fish eyeballs rotting in the summer sun, unless it's garbage day in the Meatpacking District or sitting next to a pee-scented bum on a non-air-conditioned subway.

7. Every girl is trying to sleep with Carlos from Interpol: Once upon a time, it was written that the bassist from Interpol, who looks like the cast-member that never made it on the *Addams Family*, was into chubby girls. Now all you hear in every cool bar in New York is a cacophonous din caused by 100 love-handled harpies scheming aloud on how to get him in the sack. Ditto any member of The Strokes. So sad.

8. Bad taste in mayors: For a city that is supposedly filled with intellectuals and underground ingénues, y'all have elected some fucked up mayors. Okay, maybe no one saw it coming that self-righteous prune Giuliani would overly sanitize the entire town, but then electing Bloomberg? I know you like the '80s and stuff, but why'd you have to recreate *Footloose*?

9. Obsession with new: Everyone in New York is always trying to drag you to the coolest new bar that no one knows about yet. Then you walk all the way there, somehow find it (it invariably never has a sign), sit there for five minutes nursing an \$8 drink, and then end up at the bar right next to your house.

10. It stole all our friends and gave them funny haircuts.

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SWEET THINGS

Going out for brunch in New York is dangerous—if you take the route past all the right stores, you risk coming back \$500 poorer. We checked out four of our favorite places in Lower Manhattan—Judi Rosen’s style emporium The Good, The Bad & The Ugly, Soho’s hot young upstart I Heart, LES staple M.Z. and Avenue A’s Exit 9—to see what’s cracking for fall, and left our wallets at home!

Words & styling: Kristin Vincent Photos: Michael Yinger

- 1. Shoes (\$220) and crocheted knee-highs (\$16) by Miss Dater at The Good, The Bad & The Ugly.
- 2. Spring & Clifton’s heart sweater (\$88) at M.Z.
- 3. I Heart owner Jill Bradshaw with a brown velour handbag (\$414) by Development.
- 4. Malicious Designs’ saucy skull wallet (\$24) at Exit 9.
- 5. Trolls are so hot right now. At least, that’s what these citronella candles (\$26.50) tell me.
- 6. Made With Love uses vintage charms to make hot new bracelets (\$28-\$38) from M.Z.
- 7. At last! Animal friendly deer-head hat hangers (\$160) by David Wiseman.
- 8. A perfect place to put the arsenic-laced éclair: Skull dishware (\$25-\$90) by Sarah Cihat at I Heart.
- 9. From the UK with love comes this Tonite pony shirt (\$58) at I Heart.
- 10. Bustier in electric salmon (\$185), includes matching panty (not shown) by Judi Rosen at The Good, The Bad & The Ugly.
- 11. Rollerskate and rainbow heart necklaces (\$9-\$11) at Exit 9.

Exit 9: 64 Avenue A (212) 228-0145
I Heart: 262 Moll St. (212) 219-9265
M.Z.: 57 Clinton St. (212) 228-3634
The Good, The Bad & The Ugly:
437 E. 9th St. (212) 473-3769





Illustration: Jeremy Lawson

OBSESSIONS: LEGOWELT

He's the king of analog-drenched, electro-disco masterpieces, the crown jewel of Holland's Bunker Records and a producer who's released on Ghostly, Viewlexx, Clone, Eat This, Stilleben and Cocoon. But save yourself the hardship of securing his various 12-inches and buy the recently released *Classics, 1998-2003* (Bunker). It's rife with spine-chilling atmospheric, which comes as no surprise when you consider Danny Wolfers' obsessive collection of '70s and '80s European horror films.

Brion Paul

www.legowelt.com

LEGOWELT ON HORROR: "I hate almost all Hollywood movies because they are boring and predictable—so clichéd, so clinical and perfect. Italian and Spanish horror movies are everything that a Hollywood movie isn't. They are an adventure to watch 'cause you never know what is going to happen and what strange world the director is taking you to. Lucio Fulci, Dario Argento, Jesus (a.k.a. Jesse) Franco, Joey D'Amato Mario and Lamberto Bava are favorite directors while my favorite films are Fulci's *The Beyond*, Pupi Avati's *Zeder* and De La Iglesia's *Cannibal Man*.

My first contact with these movies was in the early '90s when a German cable channel [started showing them] on Friday and Saturday nights. The first one I saw made quite an impression on me: *Tomb of the Blind Dead*, a Spanish movie about a girl that camps [at] the ruins of a haunted castle of the Templar Knights. There was a professor in it and lots of lesbian love scenes that had no connection with the movie whatsoever.

It's the overall atmospheres [that I like] and that '70s/early 80's Italian style: the actors, the clothes, the weather, the setting and the amazing soundtracks, many of which are musical masterpieces. Check out Fabio Frizzi's *The Beyond* and *City of the Living Dead*, Claudio Simonetti and Marcello Giombini's *Antrophophagus* soundtrack."

NEW FORMS FESTIVAL.

As much as we love Mutek, Transmediale and Ars Electronica, we can't help noticing how overwhelmingly male and Eurocentric those festivals are. Neither can the organizers of Vancouver's annual **New Forms Festival**, which will host panelists and multimedia artists from Asia, Africa, Europe and North America for its upcoming fourth edition (October 14-28).

Based on the central theme of Technography, this year's festival seeks to gauge the impact of new technologies on indigenous populations around the world. This theme will be explored during panel discussions and freewheeling salon sessions, at gallery events and technology workshops, and at late-night parties featuring the likes of Kit Clayton and VitaminsForYou.

As the largest festival of its kind in the Pacific Northwest, say its organizers, NFF is helping to establish the region's distinctive identity. "In the same way that art is representative of where people are from, so are the festivals that become part of that larger culture," explains Malcolm Levy, NFF's executive director of programming. "People here have a lot of strong beliefs concerning the environment and human rights, so when we're looking at themes like technography this year and ecology for '05, these represent the heart and soul of the culture in this part of the world." *Martin Turenne*

www.newformsfestival.com



Photo: Sue Costabile

▲ Kit Clayton



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DOOM 3

As a seriously hardcore geek in trendy music magazine publisher's clothing, I needed very little prompting to jump over the edge into PC gamer nerd hell. Because *Doom 3* (Windows/Xbox; id Software, \$54.99) isn't out yet for the Xbox—and because it's the most graphically demanding video game of its sort to be released—I was forced to take my humble home mp3 server and hot rod the fucker to the max. I replaced the motherboard, installed a 64-bit AMD processor, jammed in a nice ATI video card and stuffed heat sinks and colored, flashing fans all over that shit! After a few trial runs I was having some problems with the game quitting on me when the action got hot, so I found a discussion thread online on a site called majorgeeks.com (I kid you not!) and was able to get the newest video drivers to remedy the problem. Now, with seamless high-res killing and a fucking Christmas tree where my computer once was, there's only one detail I forgot to account for: my nightlight, 'cos this game is scary as hell! *Andrew Smith*
www.doom3.com



SUDEKI

Judging from the bulging breasts, tight waistline and shapely hips of the anime-style character on the *Sudeki* box (Xbox; Microsoft, \$49.99), I thought that perhaps this was one of those naughty games with special semi-naked scenes designed to gratify teenage boys and shut-in gaming freaks. However, despite its mature rating for violence, this is really a cutesy, Disney-esque, *Dungeons and Dragons*-style role-playing game. Strangely, I loved it. The storyline is simple: after a few different missions you posse up with a crew of four characters and wage various battles, gathering experience points and gaining new skills and weapons. Perhaps the lack of depth is what my addled mind needed, as I sat mesmerized night after night, destroying my sanity and my sleep schedule. And after the intensity died down, I did find one aspect of the game that gratified my inner 14-year-old; when your female characters climb up and down ladders you get a really good ass shot! *Andrew Smith*
www.sudeki.com



DUKES OF HAZZARD

You have to be a serious fan of the early '80s TV hillbilly hoot-fest to get anything out of *Dukes of Hazzard: The Return of General Lee* (PS2/Xbox; Ubisoft, \$49.99). It's not much more than your average racing game dressed up as cluttered country & western cowboy clownery. You race around Hazzard County, performing 15 missions that include picking up and dropping off stuff, tailing targets and racing the sheriff in your choice of cars—from Daisy's Roadrunner to Boss Hogg's limo. The soundtrack will have you hootin' and hollerin', featuring voiceovers from the original cast-members and the Waylon Jennings theme song. One of the most important things in a racing game is the handling of the car, and I can't say that I was impressed with this one. Unfortunately, the game falls short of evoking driving excitement. Now if only I could get inside Daisy's dukes...*that* would be exciting! *Kenny Dale*
www.ubisoft.com

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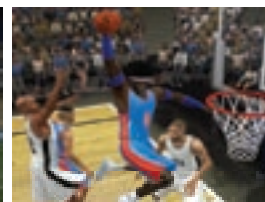


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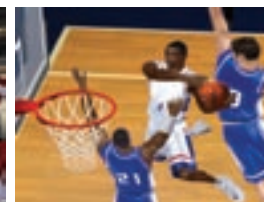
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SPIN CYCLE
NEWS AND GOSSIP
FROM THE MUSIC WORLD

Stones Throw has launched a new sub-label called Soul Cal, which will reissue rare disco 45s. UK grime artist Mark One has a new album, *One Way*, out this month on experimental headfuck label Planet Mu. Dan and Amy of the band I Am The World Trade Center DJ under the nickname The Twin Powers; if you're ever in Athens, Georgia, check out their Wednesday night weekly at GO Bar. Triple 5 Soul has just taken on management of streetwear brands Boxfresh and Subscript, and the company has plans to join forces with more brands in the coming year, under the umbrella name Project Soul. Reportedly, Cex's new album, *Invisible Sidis*, will feature cameos from members of Mogwai, Joan of Arc, Anticon and Death Cab. In September, VP Records launched a new reggae/dancehall-related clothing label called Riddim Driven. The Stay Gold gallery in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, recently wrapped up *Yo! What Happened to Peace?*, a show of peace and anti-war posters from the likes of Robbie Conal, Buffmonster and Seripop. Check them out at www.yowhathappenedtopeace.org. Puerto Rico's slamming Candela Bar Festival happens October 14-16 with performances by the top names in *nouveau* soul, plus an art show featuring Swoon, Doze Green, David Ellis and Shepard Fairey. Avid Technology, manufacturers of ProTools, recently bought fellow industry leader M-Audio, who manufacture M-Audio, Evolution and Midiman products, as well as distribute Reason and Ableton Live in the US. A feature-length documentary on The Ramones, *End of the*



Century, was released on August 20. Check it out at www.endofthecentury.com. Pitchfork Media reports an upcoming Hollywood film about Joy Division's Ian Curtis in the making, based on *Touching From A Distance*, written by Curtis' widow, Deborah. Jude Law is rumored to be playing Curtis. Veteran remixer and producer Howie B will release his new project, *Mayonnaise*—a collaboration with vocalists Crispin Hunt of Longpigs and erstwhile Björk producer Will O'Donovan—this month on Lunaticworks. For a deeper view of 9/11 and the history of Lower Manhattan, check out the Ground Zero Memorial Soundwalk, a headphone-guided tour through the site of the former World Trade Center and its environs. The tour is narrated by author Paul Auster and was inspired by NPR's award-winning Sonic Memorial Project. For more, see www.sonicmemorial.org. Mouse on Mars will be touring the US throughout this month with Ratatat and Junior Boys; they have a new book of visual artists interpreting their work due out in December. WarpFilms, the visual arm of Warp Records, releases its first full-length feature this month. *Dead Man's Shoes* is an axe-wielding revenge thriller set in a decaying community in the UK Midlands. Written by Shane Meadows and Paddy Considine, the soundtrack features The Earlies, Calexico, Gravenhurst and Laurent Garnier. Rest in peace, superfreak: Punk funk icon Rick James died of unspecified medical conditions on August 6 in Los Angeles. He was 56. On October 26, DFA will release new singles from Black Leotard Front and The Juan Maclean, closely followed by a three-CD set called *Compilation #2*. West Coast all-stars Likwit Crew—which includes Tha Alkaholiks, Defari and Madlib, among others—kicked off a new monthly hip-hop night in L.A. on July 29 at 7021 Hollywood Blvd. Scottish indie/electronic four-some The Beta Band are rumored to be breaking up at the end of 2004. On August 26, scratch champions The X-Ecutioners performed at Riker's Island prison in New York; in November, they will play at Gila River Indian Reservation in Chandler, Arizona. San Francisco's Flavor Group and drink manufacturers Red Bull have created a street dance fantasy camp—held October 31 through November 7 in Southern California—where the new generation of breakdancers, housers and capoeiristas can learn from legends like Crazy Legs and Don Campbell. Visit www.redbullbeatriders.com for more. A new video for Infinite Livez's "The Adventures of the Lactating Man" is available at www.ninjatune.net. And we're out like trout...

1. Genevieve Gauckler's poster from *Yo! What Happened to Peace?*; 2. Ian Curtis by Philippe Carly; 3. The Beta Band; 4. Calexico (Joey Burns and John Concertino) at Jackpot Records in Portland, OR, by Jason Sherrett; 5. Madlib by Christopher Woodcock.



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Words: Vivian Host
Illustration: Doug Lee

I'm not a native New Yorker, but I'm the consummate city dweller—and I moved to New York to see if I could hack it in the world's consummate city.

They say what doesn't kill you makes you stronger—and if freezing cold winters, city-wide blackouts, pollution from 12,000 taxicabs and blistering hangovers from bars open until 6 a.m. don't do it, I don't know what will.

Strangely, very few people asked me why I was moving to New York. I mean, I guess it's obvious. Where else can you get a 50-cent hot dog, party with Guru and watch the sun rise over the Statue of Liberty from a Brooklyn rooftop, all in the same day and without a car? And people love New York because you can be as known—or as anonymous—as you want; you can live as cheaply or as lavishly as you want. You can settle down and push a stroller in Park Slope or play survival of the fittest in the East Village; you can move to outer Brooklyn and

build the industrial loft of your dreams with your band, or become a roller disco star in the Bronx. It's the Horatio Alger myth tightly packed into five boroughs, where the bum on the park bench next to you is an ex-bond trader and that boy falling off the bar stool is tomorrow's MTV icon. But unlike LA, all these people are interacting with each other constantly; screaming, fighting, fucking and laughing without the protection of a hermetically sealed, air-conditioned bubble.

Being a native of Los Angeles—where few things are older than 1930—I'm obsessed

with history. I like New York because I always feel the specter of the past in its streets and buildings—everything's changing constantly, but you can't help but feel that things are similar to the way they were in, say, 1900. The streets are still noisy, filled with litter, dog shit and sewage, people are still living nearly on top of one another and blaring music out of their windows (except it's Mobb Deep now, not ragtime). My friend's Lower East Side apartment still looks and feels so much like a tenement that you can almost imagine a family of six crammed into it.

Walking around New York, you realize that it's still the site of massive immigration, except now the Eastern Europeans and Dominicans and Chinese and Nigerians are natives, scowling at the hordes of tattooed and drunken masses who've recently exiled themselves from Japan, London, and, more than anywhere, the indie rock wilds of Middle America.

Lots of people like to complain that New York is over—that the Cabaret Law, increasingly conservative mayors, high prices and the fear of the apocalypse have sanitized what was once a 24-hour carnival. But we

all know that New York will never be over, even though various people will get over *it* and move on. People and trends will be born, die and recycle themselves continually in NY, with the rest of the world watching. Which is why this issue is dedicated to the people, places and sounds that make up the New York of now. You've heard all about New York's incredible musical past and tons of speculators are bidding on its future, but we're looking at the present (though no one can be sure how long it will last). Welcome to the new New York.

DFA's main man goes from the New Jersey farmlands to ruling New York.

Words: Brion Paul
Photo: Kareem Black



Dear reader, meet a New York icon and DJ, founder of the bulletproof production duo and record label DFA, and the genius behind LCD Soundsystem. The latter group's scant three singles—a clinically engineered nuclear fusion of Ian Dury/David Byrne-fronted Daft Punked disco rock—have proven vastly influential, carefully setting a stage of anticipation for their ensuing full-length debut.

This casually dressed 34-year-old extroverted introvert speaks almost exclusively in exquisitely crafted, enthusiastically formulated rants, full of jackknifing pull quotes that ooze *italics* and implied exclamation points! All any self-respecting journalist—nay, human—can do in this situation is sit back and let those rants take center stage. Citizens of the world, I give you James Murphy...

James on being from New York:

"I'm not from New York. I'm from New Jersey, like half the other people that live here. Princeton Junction. I was from a little farm town—really, really small. I didn't come into New York very much. I was terrified of it. I remember taking the train into New York when I was 13 when The Smiths first, first came out because I'd heard it on college radio. I went to Bleecker Bobs and I was like, 'I want to get the Smiths Brothers. The Smiths Brothers...' 'This Charming Man?' And he was like, 'Ohhh, *The Smiths*.' And they were so snotty to me. I felt so humiliated that I'd gotten the name wrong. Now that I look back, I was a 13-year-old kid from a farm town in New Jersey who'd gotten on a train and come to New York the month that the first Smiths single reached New York and asked for it and I was being made to feel like I didn't know what I was talking about by a *clerk*? In reality, that was a staggering music fan achievement for a kid who was a year out of Little League! I still have the 12-inch, a Rough Trade import."

James on scenes and the DFA:

"I don't like scenes very much; they're usually very ugly. They almost always start from something beautiful—people who really get excited about something and they feed off each other. But then it turns into high school: 'You're not cool if you don't have that; you are cool if you have that.' With [DFA Records], I can't control what's going to happen and I can't control the end result. But we can try and just keep the motives pure. We work with people we like, personally as well as aesthetically; people whose motives we support, whose music we want to see change and expand. And those people are really different. And they all get along, but I like feeling like it's

a strange little parlor party and not a bunch of kids hanging out outside a 7-11 that all listen to the same shit."

James on DJing:

"In Europe, I see the same eight faces. The promoters want to have a certain type of night so they'll book me and Ivan Smagghe from Black Strobe or 2ManyDJs. There's a group of us that get shuffled around. The last time I saw Ivan, I said, 'Doesn't [DJing these clubs] feel different?' And he said 'Yeah, it *does* feel different.' I think now it feels like it's a 'genre' whereas we used to be the guys who may do a great job or may get dragged out of the DJ booth and beaten. But we found each other and things started to change."

James on his goals for LCD Soundsystem:

"I'm not particularly talented or charismatic. I'm not a great singer. I'm not a great songwriter. There's nothing really exceptional about me or my band. We're all just a bunch of pretty normal people trying to do our best. But the methodology is incredibly 10 times better than most bands; what we expect of ourselves, the drill we put ourselves through to be like: 'This has to be *honest*,' but it can't just be the *pose* honest. We want to go play a show, we want to fight with every other band, we want to be better. It's a competition on some level and we want it to feel like a competition, but never in a negative way—we just want to bring it. I want to make really good, interesting music that satisfies me as both a pop song and as something new. I'm not going to be a huge success, but maybe the people that are more talented and more creative who may have a better shot will be a little bummed out that this dumpy 34-year-old is making a more interesting record than they are. Anybody can do what I'm doing, it's absolutely simple. That's the goal: To have fun. To kick ass. And be really, really loud."

LCD Soundsystem's self-titled two-CD debut will be released in January 2005. www.dfarecords.com

Hip-hop's music man tells the truth about life in the hood, the typical rap record and his real retirement plans.

Words: Ross Hogg
Photo: Jessica Miller



*L*isten closely, so your attention's undivided/Many in the past have tried to do what I did." That's how Brooklyn native Masta Ace introduced himself to the world in 1988 on Marley Marl's "The Symphony." Sixteen years later, he's still doing what others can't—making cohesive, relevant albums and rhymin' like no one else, all without mainstream acceptance.

"I've always gone against the grain just because," he offers, by way of explanation. "That's why my fans are a different kinda fan." One of his biggest fans is Eminem, who thanked Ace (among a very elite group of other hip-hoppers) in his 2003 Grammy acceptance speech. "Maybe it's only every 25th person who feels how I feel. And yeah, that's probably stopped me from huge commercial success, because I could never make that *obvious* record."

Since 1993's masterful *Slaughterhouse* LP—an all-out lampooning of gangsta rap and horror-core—Ace's albums have been heavily conceptual, featuring incomparable narrative rhymes and intricate plots that blur the lines between the real Ace and the characters he portrays. 1995's *Sittin' On Chrome* was an homage to custom car culture filled with songs like "Born To Roll" and "The I.N.C. Ride," some of the genre's first odes to rims and rides. Its 808-laced anthems became standard cruising soundtracks out West and down South, but met with resistance in New York, where he was seen as "abandoning the East." 2001's critically acclaimed *Disposable Arts*

found Ace playing the role of a fresh-out-of-prison convict who enrolls in a school to learn the finer points of the music biz.

One of those points has always been that violence sells, but Ace has never pandered to that demographic. "There's more to the hood than guns, knives, dice and people getting murdered," he says. "I grew up in Howard Houses, one of the roughest projects in Brooklyn, and my childhood was fun. I just think it's more interesting to talk about the good stuff."

On his new album, *A Long Hot Summer*, the first release on his M3 record label, he continues to walk the line between depiction and glorification, even finding time to reflect on the beauty of everyday life. With the debut of sidekick character Fats Belvedere, guest spots from Jean Grae, Beatnuts and Ed O.G., and production from Dug Infinite and DJ Spinna, the LP is the prequel to *Disposable Arts*, outlining the path that led him to prison. On the first single, the 9th Wonder-produced "Good Ol' Love," he asks that fans "show a little love before it's over." So, are the rumors of his retirement true?

"I'm gonna stop putting out full-length LPs," Ace clarifies. "You'll still hear me on records by Punch & Words, Jean Grae or Strick. You'll still hear my voice, but I'm trying to get my label off the ground, so I have to focus on that. I just wanna put a little good hip-hop back into this thing."

A Long Hot Summer is out now on M3. www.M3hiphop.com, www.mastaace.com

Outer space disco funk from deep in the heart of Brooklyn.

Words: Roy Dank Photo: Jessica Miller



▲ Modal's Jay Lee (left) and Brennan Green

Debuting early last year with Brennan Green's "Vita Contemplativa," a sprawling disco-meets-jazz—or is that jazz-meets-disco?—epic, Brooklyn's Modal imprint risked releasing a bonafide artistic statement at a time when most dance music was simply a regurgitation of the past. Green's single found favor on dancefloors the world over, firmly establishing the label, as well as the adventurous producer, at the top of the contemporary disco pack.

Green, a Brooklynite (by way of Canada), has proven to be a crucial element in the Modal equation, an in-house producer who compliments and adds to the vision set forth by label impresario Jay Lee. "The label as a whole is just the beginning of

a big experiment in sound, really," Green reflects. "The more I learn, the more I want to try things out, and Modal's been the perfect place for this."

But Green's not the only one raising the bar; house music eccentric Maurice Fulton and Norway's present-day disco dons—Rune Lindbaek, Hans-Peter Lindstrom and Prins Thomas—are also playing for this team. Fulton's collaboration with budding singer Bibi, "Don't You See," could well be the prolific artist's most sublime composition to date. The Norwegians went the extra mile, leaving Earth behind only to beam down their cosmic disco communiqué, "Alien In My Pocket," for Modal to disseminate. "It is an odd cast of disco misfits, but I like it that way," muses Lee about the distinctly idiosyncratic quality the label's roster boasts.

Modal's latest release may well be its most ambitious yet. "Modern Robot Chorus," a musical conversation between Kuwaiti-born Fatima Al-Qadiri and Brennan Green as InfantTwo, was shaped over the course of many months at Green's 99 Brooklyn studio whilst the now London-based Al-Qadiri was still living in Manhattan. Despite the miles that separate his artists, Lee knows the city remains his label's creative nucleus. "Despite the pond-jumping and time-zone crossing, Modal's character is unmistakably New York."

InfantTwo's "Modern Robot Chorus" is out now on Modal. www.modal-music.com

Putting the cock back in rock.

Words: Tyra Bangs Photo: Jessica Miller



Morningwood has a lot of great songs, but their most popular is "Take Off Your Clothes," a raunchy rock 'n' roll grind that kicks off with a loping Breeders-esque bassline before adding synthetic handclaps, squalling guitars and the breathy get-naked demands of 22-year-old vocalist Chantal Claret. The song's got enough raw sex appeal to start your CD player oozing, but it's not until you see it performed live that you get the true essence of the aptly-named Morningwood's appeal.

"At every show, someone gets naked...and we've been on a roll for a while now," explains bassist Pedro Yanowitz. "Usually it's during 'Take Off Your Clothes,' where people come up on stage and start whipping their clothes off and Chantal starts licking their bodies. You know that Bruce Springsteen video for 'Dancing in the Dark,' where Bruce pulls a girl out of the crowd and she gets up on stage and dances with him? It's like that."

Morningwood's, ahem, members are no strangers to crazy adventures; in fact, they court them. The band is fond of tequila and props, which have included hobbyhorses, fake moustaches and *Lord of the Rings* costumes. Maybe it's no surprise that twice audience members have had to be taken away to Bellevue mental hospital during shows.

Or maybe it's the music that's driving people crazy—completely unselfconscious distortion rock that at times channels Joan Jett

("Horses"), Luscious Jackson ("Everybody Rules"), and straight-up '80s sin-punk fury ("Jetsetter"). You can hear influences of band members' pedigrees creeping in at times—from drummer Japa Keenon's stint in Cibo Matto to guitarist Richard Steel's time with glam rock outfit Spacehog—but Morningwood sounds familiar, rather than referential. Meanwhile, Claret's on-stage antics are more than matched by her memorable vocals, which can go from cute indie pop swagger to nymphomaniac screech in under five seconds.

So far, the band has logged plenty of time playing at New York venues like the Knitting Factory and Piano's, and produced a sold out six-song EP and "It's Tits" 12-inch. That will all change early 2005, with the release of the band's first album. In between copious drinking and Pedro tending a budding basil garden, Morningwood's been practicing quite a bit at their Lower East Side storefront studio. Still, there's no telling what to expect from the record. "I'm not sure that it's going to be quite like *Lord of the Rings*," muses Steel. "But there will be plenty of power and magic."

www.morningwoodrocks.com



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Mixtress - Baby Anne cracks the whip with her new mix CD - a 70 minute 'high.'



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MASTA KILLA
No Said Date
The highly anticipated solo debut from Wu-tang Clan member Masta Killa, completes the Wu-tang saga. *No Said Date* features the entire Clan with production from RZA, Mathematics, and True Master. A hip-hop classic.



PETE MISER
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Brilliant Hip Hop from Dido's World Tour DJ. Featuring the smash single & video *Scent Of A Robot*.

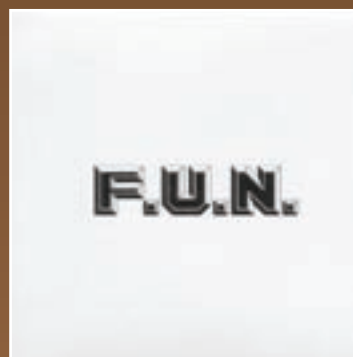
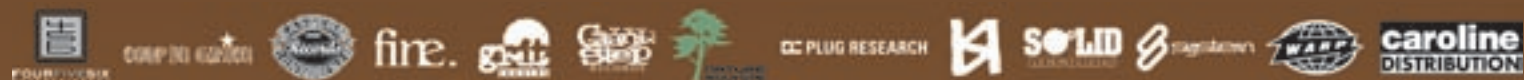


SHY CHILD
One With The Sun
Synth and drums duo with furious dance rhythms—like the Silver Apples meets Daft Punk.



TRUTH ENOLA
6 O'clock Straight
De La Soul protégée Truth Enola finally delivers his long awaited debut album, *6 O'clock Straight*. For fans of Mos Def, Talib Kweli and the Roots.

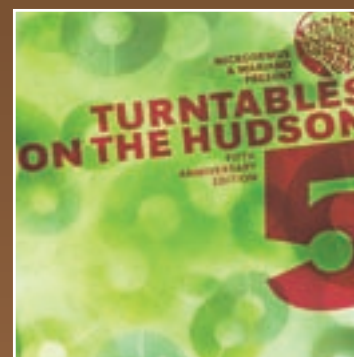
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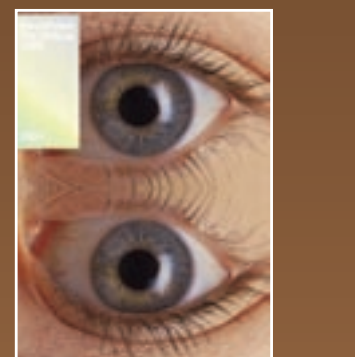
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Alec DeRuggiero braves leather daddies and discarded syringes to put good music on the map.

Words: Raf Katigbak
Photo: David Naugle



Ray Pirkle likes to reminisce about the good old days. The days when West 13th Street was not so much teeming with high-five-ing Wallstreet bankers and silicone glamazons as it was with transvestite hookers and leather daddy midgets. The days when the club Pirkle helped create—APT—was damn near impossible to find. “When we started in the Meatpacking District four years ago, it was a serious commitment to go there,” he explains. “There was no press, it was on a terrifying street where you had to jump over a hooker and kick the syringe out of your way before you came to this unmarked door. People didn’t come there arbitrarily; they came because they heard there was this place that had good music.”

When restaurateur Jonathan Morr hired Pirkle and musical director Alec DeRuggiero to help kick-start this venture in 2000, they knew exactly what was missing from New York nightlife: a well-designed place where the patrons were served fast and treated well—and where they could blow their musical domes on left of center music. Designed to look like you just stepped into someone’s upscale house party (complete with vintage fridge, bed, TV and even family photos), the two-floor lounge quickly became a regular hangout mixing local hipsters, music aficionados and Japanese cool hunters.

According to Pirkle, opening up a successful club in New York is easy; *keeping* it successful is another story. “A few years ago, every club owner got into this formula where you have some transgender door per-

son, you put on Jay-Z or Usher or other horrible stuff, you get some “girls gone wild” making out and the guys get excited, then you have a Paris Hilton sighting. Suddenly you’re hot for six months and then closed after a year because you have no foundation. Luckily, Alec is one of the best music minds in New York,” prides Pirkle, “he really came up with a program that most people couldn’t touch.”

DeRuggiero is more willing to share some trade secrets. “[The music policy] was about finding people who are fully immersed in what they play,” he says, referring to regular monthlies run by crews from *Straight No Chaser* and leftfield music merchants Other Music. “As big as this city is, the music scene is pretty small—you’ve got to stick with people that eat, sleep and breathe whatever they’re into, and you get a following out of that.”

Regular nights by New York hip-hop staple Bobbito, Metro Area’s Darshan, and tech-jazz adventurers Gamall Awad and Tyler Askew—and one-offs that have included UK deep soul selector Keb Darge, rockabilly techno punk-funkist Andrew Weatherall and members of Cologne’s vital Kompakt label—have kept music heads flocking...all without the aid of a dancefloor (at least, a legal one). “My whole philosophy is the music will always prevail,” continues DeRuggiero. “APT’s definitely been around for a while—it’s not a new hotspot. But if the music is strong enough, the same music lovers will come out to hear the DJs if that’s the only place you can hear ‘em.”

www.aptwbsite.com

Editing an art magazine wasn’t enough for Ihu Anyanwu, so she decided to become the next Grace Jones.

Words: Raf Katigbak
Illustration: FAILE

From a young age, New York-based artist Ihu Anyanwu learned to make the most out of life. Although these days she splits her time publishing her techno/art zine *Repellent*, DJing and preparing for her first full-length album (a cross-pollination of dirty booty bass, dubby No Wave and sexy, irreverent vocals under her G.rizo moniker), she spent many of her formative years in Nigeria.

Like many hopeful Nigerian expats, armed with a Western education and a renewed optimism for social change, Anyanwu’s parents returned with their daughter to their newly democratized homeland in the early ‘80s. As radio waves carried the revolutionary rhythms of Fela Kuti, the young singer-to-be dialed into the sounds of black America. Listening religiously to *Soul Train* and pop stars like Wham, DeBarge, Cameo and Michael Jackson, Anyanwu spent her leisure time making up songs and wild dance routines with her Lagos schoolmates. Growing up, she felt that anything was possible. But, as things sometimes turn out, it was too good to be true. “We thought we could have the best of it all, take what’s good from the West and keep our traditions,” she explains, “but somehow my parents’ generation was unsuccessful with the mix.”

New York in the early ‘90s was much like Lagos in the ‘80s. With its bustling energy-packed with noise, people, smells, sensations, grime, crime and passion—it too was a city of contradictions and infinite promise. It was a perfect adopted home for Anyanwu, who spent every free moment there after moving in with her father in New Jersey. “I was culturally and socially displaced when I first came to this country. I couldn’t assimilate to any particular group and I had to make my own space. NYC was and is the place to do that,” she explains. “I was attracted by the freaks. I used to think to myself ‘How come these people are dressed this way, act this way, look this way?’ It was so interesting to see that you had *options* and can paint your life how you want it.”



And she has. While Anyanwu’s forward-thinking zine *Repellent* and its event offspring Repellent Fest have already garnered praise from punters and pundits alike, her raw, soulful and somewhat husky voice on her G.rizo debut 12”, “Je Me Mentis” (Codek Records), is equally impressive as it intersects Lagos and New York’s “anything goes” attitudes (think Grace Jones versus Mad Professor soundclashing at the Mudd Club). Anyanwu spent the summer in Vienna preparing her solo album and collaborating with everyone from Sofa Surfers’ Wolfgang Schlogl to Patrick Pulsinger.

She seems to be constantly challenging herself, describing her multi-tasking ethos as Freestyle Expressionism. “It’s about expressing yourself in whatever channel is most effective,” she says. “As you have the idea or the concept, then choose the medium that is most effective to communicate.”

www.repellentzine.com

From one Jamaica to another, the Chin family spreads reggae/dancehall across the globe. Words: David Katz



VP is the Jamaica, Queens-based label that brought Sean Paul to worldwide superstardom, and the link by which Jamaica's leading dancehall producers bring their product to the international marketplace. Yet VP Records is much more than just a dancehall concern; in fact, as the largest distributor of Jamaican music outside the island, the company is nothing short of reggae's international headquarters.

Though VP officially celebrates its 25th anniversary this year, the roots of the company go far deeper. In the late 1950s, Vincent Chin, the son of a carpenter, emigrated to Jamaica from mainland China and opened Randy's Record Mart in downtown Kingston as an outlet for American rhythm and blues. Shortly thereafter, Vincent founded the Randy's label, issuing some of the very first discs featuring local Jamaican talent.

By 1968, Randy's had significantly expanded: the shop was a major meeting place for music industry personnel; its distribution service, run largely by Vincent's wife Patricia, was indispensable and its newly constructed recording facility quickly emerged as the studio of choice for Jamaica's leading producers. In the early 1970s, The Wailers, Lee Perry, Dennis Brown, Gregory Isaacs, Augustus Pablo and countless others made important recordings there.

By the end of the decade, ongoing political and social upheaval resulted in a widespread exodus; Vince and Pat moved from Kingston, Jamaica, to Jamaica, Queens, forming VP as a retail outlet and US distribution service in 1979. With their children Chris, Randy Junior and Angela, Vincent and Patricia Chin have since developed VP into the biggest reggae wholesaler in the USA.

In the '80s, the company's widespread distribution network brought reggae and soca all over North America. The VP label was officially launched in 1993 as a high-profile home for top caliber dancehall and soca artists. Although Yellowman, Super Cat and Shabba Ranks brought some degree of early success, according to Chris Chin (now Vice President of Marketing), a major turning point came in 1999 when the label garnered the prestigious award of Billboard's number one reggae label, following Beenie Man's *Many Moods of Moses* album and standout single "Who Am I," which both tore up the US charts. Beenie's album *The Doctor* and Buju Banton's *Inna Heights* brought further recognition, as did later works by Beres Hammond, Morgan Heritage and Sizzla.

In the 1990s, Vincent Chin moved to Florida, where ongoing health problems curtailed his involvement in VP; he succumbed to diabetes last year. After Chris and Randy Junior became more active in the company, VP shifted gears, greatly boosting the profile of cutting-edge dancehall and upfront soca in the industry. It was this drive of this younger dancehall

▲ Vincent Chin (center, no hat), VP founder, with son Chris, current president of VP; taken in 1966 at Randy's Records in Kingston, Jamaica

generation that eventually caught the interest of Atlantic executive Craig Kallman, who signed a multimillion-dollar business deal between the two companies in 2002.

The turning point came with Sean Paul's "Gimme The Light," a catalyst for dancehall's incredible popularity; following fast on his heels were suave crooner Wayne Wonder, flamboyant deejay Elephant Man, controversial quartet TOK and feisty chanteuse Tanya Stephens. A marketing arrangement with Puma, sponsors of the Jamaican Athletics Team at the Olympics, didn't hurt either. With all the recent acclaim and achievements, what's next for VP Records? "Our focus is the same as it's always been," Chris Chin insists, "which is to expose the best of our music and culture to the widest community possible."

www.vprecords.com

Navigating New York's bhangra bazaar. Words and Photos: Derek Beres



New York rightfully claims birthrights to the American chapter of bhangra. A style socially and sonically akin to hip-hop, the sound blew up Stateside due to Jay-Z's reworking of Panjabi MC's five-year old London club smash "Mundian To Bach Ke" last year. Led by the distinctive *dhol* (a high bass drum played with two sticks), the music born in the Punjab ("Land of Five Rivers") region of India re-rooted itself in the UK in the late '70s. No party has singularly exposed this music to Americans like DJ Rekha's seven-year old Basement Bhangra bash. Outside those Tribeca walls, however, a storm is brewing.

"It is irresistible, infectious, undeniable. It comes as an easy love affair," says Mumbai, India-born DJ DK Khambata, whose High Chai and other parties feature a range of far-reaching sounds. Her sets blend bhangra into breaks, hip-hop and d&b, and her recent projects have included two mixed compilations for San Francisco-based Project Ahimsa: *Bhang! Goes Bollywood* and *Indian Summer*. Next up: *Safe Bhang!*, a "conscious clubbing mix for AIDS awareness in South Asia."

DJ Navdeep infuses Punjabi roots with a hip-hop upbringing, dropping *dhol*, *tumbi* and *dholki* into an eclectic palate of hard-edged rap and d&b rhythms. His debut, *Yaathra*, is a consortium of styles fleshed out by distinctive flair, as his citywide sets prove. "To me, the real excitement comes from using traditional bhangra instruments in a completely fresh context," he says. Noting stylistic similarities between hip-hop and bhangra, he adds, "they are both beat-heavy forms that focus on getting people dancing. The strength of the vocalist is what makes the bhangra song bang."

Bikram Singh is one such vocalist. Contributing beautifully to Navdeep's



▲ clockwise from top left: Sarina Jain; Navdeep; Bikram Singh; DK Khambata

"Jogi," the Punjab-bred Singh relocated in his youth to Queens and began meshing cultures. With an album due this fall, he's already licensed a half-dozen tracks to compilations. Living in New York but touring globally, he finds that bhangra's mass appeal relies on its ability to borrow. "The younger generation of DJs and producers are mixing in their experiences and sounds they grew up listening to," he says. "Not just bhangra but hip-hop, house and dancehall. This hybrid is making bhangra very popular, because it not only appeals to *desis* but also to *non-desis*, since it has elements they can relate to."

Bhangra is as much about dance as it is music. Traditional styles include Jhumar, Liddi and Giddha, originally performed at wedding and agricultural ceremonies. For the Rajasthan-born Sarina Jain, lineage and modernity merge. In Manhattan, she teaches her Masala Bhangra Workout, a blend of total body conditioning set to the beat of bhangra. "You get a sense of a workout to Indian dance," she says, "and secondly you get a cultural aspect. Bhangra is pumping, you just want to hear it over and over. It gets into your blood. It's addicting, intoxicating."

Basement Bhangra: www.basementbhanga.com; Sarina Jain: www.masaladance.com; DK Khambata: www.gen-om.com; Navdeep: www.360navdeep.com; Bikram Singh: www.bikram Singh.com

New York's premier global beat DJ/producers bring melting pot dancefloors to a boil.

Words: Peter Nicholson



▲ Nickodemus (left) and Osiris

For Nickodemus and Osiris, the music is for the party and the party is for the people.

Don't try to peg them to one style—the pair's sets journey from Afrobeat to hip-hop to funk to house and beyond, and are as wide-ranging as the diverse crowds they've drawn to Osiris' Afrokinetic and Nickodemus' Turntables on the Hudson club nights.

Both born and bred in the New York area, the dexterous duo has been a steady presence on the scene since the mid-'90s, in the heady heyday of what once was known as acid jazz. In 1998, together with DJ Mariano, Nickodemus began hosting Turntables on the Hudson (which has also spawned a successful series of singles and compilations with help from Giant Step Recordings) while at the same time Osiris was getting his feet wet in production, starting on a record with Boom Bip for Mush.

In addition to the pair's constant party-rock-in', the two have released work for Compost, Giant Step and Ecco Chamber, among others. And, in addition to their respective TTOH and Afrokinetic weeklies, they recently launched their first monthly together, the first Wednesday of each month at Table 50. Nickodemus' Wonderwheel Records will soon release a joint 12", Osiris is working on a solo effort for his Afrokinetic label, and the remixes continue to flow, bringing a joy-

ful noise to all who care to join the party.

"Our environment for the music is dance clubs," explains Nickodemus. "It's a good mix of connecting a lot of people. Music is all around us—everywhere you go there are different cultures and their music...On top of that, we're on the dancefloor and it's nice to translate that through the medium of dance and see people of all different cultures react to it. It's really rewarding." The collage of cultures embodied by New York has also been reflected in the pair's studio work, including remixes of Argentinean tango composer Astor Piazzolla and Indian *sarangi* master Ustad Sultan Khan.

Osiris adds that the various genres they've remixed have long been played at their parties, and he's quick to give inspirational credit to New York itself. "I think [our musical diversity] is a direct result of where we live," he notes. "From the bottom up, it's the root and our surroundings and environment—it's what we're interested in and I think everything really comes from that, all the way up to our production."

www.afrokinetic.com, www.wonderwheelrecordings.com

Two wheels are better than four when it comes to pedal jousting or charitable works.

Words: Margaret Murray
Photo: Jessica Miller



Traversing the Brooklyn Bridge under the stars. Hopping a curb in Midtown. Careening out of the way of a speeding taxi. Riding out to Coney Island on a Sunday afternoon. Mountain biking an overgrown rail line. Track biking. Low-riding. Fair Ladies and Lemon Peelers.

There's a childlike artistry to urban cycling that becomes obscured when presented with all the grown-up benefits: gives good cardio; reduces dependency on oil; eliminates automobile traffic significantly. With forces everywhere dictating a dearth of frivolity, and the need to be ever (orange) alert to danger, there's a gleeful presence in the city—merry pranksters jousting atop 10-foot bikes made of found material, a transplanted Californian hosting the city's hippest (and most sincere) film festival, grassroots philanthropists using bikes to foster a sense of community, roving art pieces—and all of it is working to wrest back a bit of respect for New York's tightly-knit street cycling community.

Brendt Barbur moved from San Francisco to New York five years ago, and in short order was charged with obstructing traffic at a Critical Mass ride and hit by a bus. Not willing to seek out an "us vs. them" political way of dealing with what he saw as two crucial obstacles to cycling in the city—lack of infrastructure and a reluctance to accept cycling as a desirable lifestyle—he decided that a celebration of all things two-wheeled was in order. Thus was born the Bicycle Film Festival—an unlikely amalgam of film, performance art, music and activism that, now in its fourth year, has significantly changed the landscape for urban cycling.

This year's highlight was a re-creation of Walter Hill's cult classic, *The Warriors*. Not a remake. A re-creation. On bicycles. More than 800 costumed cyclists, comprising 89 "gangs," trekked the fabled, punch-strewn route from the Bronx to Coney Island. Featured prominently in the film, directed in part by Josh Weinstein and Chris Ryan of punk rock Team Spider, was Black

Label, a collective of primarily Bed-Stuy-based messengers, mechanics and cyclists who spend their days off jousting on found-object, dumpster-dived and welded post-consumer double, triple and even quadruple-decker tall bikes. Working with Time's Up, the organizers of Critical Mass NYC, Black Label has put aside its summer agenda of organizing parties and jousting matches to create a work-exchange bike library for out-of-town RNC protesters needing quick, cheap and reliable transportation.

Karen Overton, a former member of Transportation Alternatives, parlayed a \$25,000 city-funded grant into the highly successful Recycle-A-Bicycle, an after-school program designed to teach city kids how to repair and rebuild bikes. Participants earn credit toward their own bikes and gear by working on the more than 1,500 bikes donated annually. Despite having its funding yanked by the Giuliani administration, RAB has gone on to deliver 400 bikes to Ghana's Village Project, and has started a mountain bike camp in cooperation with the Henry Street Settlement, staffed by RAB alumni. Recycling karma as well as chainwheels, young and old Recycle A Bicycle participants are required to volunteer for their own community project.

If politicking, protesting and philanthropy aren't your thing, there's always artist Jessica Findlay's Aeolian Rides—a mass ride featuring wind inflatable nylon costumes available in three styles: See Bubble Go, See Drop Go, and See Bunny Go. Part rolling street art, part performance piece, and with participants looking for all the world like a cross between the *Donnie Darko* rabbit and an errant pack of marshmallows, the Aeolian riders—complete with artistic sensibility and sense of humor intact—are scheduled for San Francisco in October and Cape Town, South Africa, later this fall.

www.bicyclefilmfest.com, visit www.aeolian-ride.info, www.blacklabelnyc.com

Clothing by Laura Dawson and Annabelle NYC.

www.lauradawson.com, www.annabellenyc.com

AUTUMN BOWL

44

Brooklyn skateboarders now have a private spot to float fat leans and grab method air tweakers.

Words: Ben Dietz Photo: Tim Stanton



▲ Andreas Trolf at the Autumn Bowl

If there's one lesson to be gleaned from *Dogtown & Z-Boys*, Stacy Peralta's vainglorious homage to his youth in Venice Beach, it's that skateboarding today owes everything to the fierce "locals only" credo that the Venice crew maintained. From the height of the skateboarding boom in the late '70s through its leanest years in the early '90s, being a skateboarder was about owning a place and protecting it as your own, even though in literal terms the spot was never really yours to begin with. Lacking the parks or public support that high-profile events like the X-Games have facilitated in recent years, "locals only" was a lesson that skaters learned well.

Twenty-five years after the peak of the Z-Boys' fame, the Autumn Bowl in Greenpoint, Brooklyn, is giving "locals only" a whole new meaning. Hidden in the bowels of a dilapidated factory on the East River, the bowl is a remarkable co-op skatepark owned and operated by the skaters who use it. Accessible 24/7, the bowl functions as an always-open country club for skateboarders. Only keyholders and their guests can skate; members pay monthly rent and contribute basic maintenance, but its spirit is wholly inclusive. "Everyone is really protective of it," says Seth Roscoe, one of the builders. "It's something everyone can feel a part of, because everyone chipped in, in some way."

The bowl is also unique in its genesis, and will hopefully serve as a model for similar parks in the future. Dave Mims, whose Autumn Skateshop

holds the lease to the bowl, secured a one-time contribution from Tylenol's "Ouch" marketing budget, which allowed the builders (including 5-Boro pro Pat Smith, Rob Erickson, Roscoe and others) to think big from the beginning—but also freed the bowl of corporate obligations. It's a laudable symbiosis; Tylenol has generated a massive outpouring of goodwill and good press, while the bowl's members are welcomed in a spot that they control and maintain autonomously. Consequently, the bowl is never crowded. And, unlike public skateparks, Rollerbladers and BMXers are kept out of the mix.

Tylenol's contribution has also underscored the potential for skaters to exploit corporate marketing budgets to create spaces in which they can exist without compromise. Since opening, the bowl has hosted video premieres, rock shows and parties on a semi-regular basis. More events and exhibitions are on the way, highlighting everything from films to sneakers in the coming months.

All of which means that, even if you're not a local, you'll be able to check out what Autumn's community of skaters has put together. All they have to do now is find time to skate it.

"I've probably skated for a total of like five hours since we finished it," Mims laughs.

www.autumnskateboarding.com

DAPTONE

45

Brooklyn soul revivalists bring you beats thicker than a thunder chicken's thigh and funk as warm as an old friend.

Words: Alex Posell
Photo: Rayon Richards



When you first listen to Sharon Jones and the Dap Kings' debut album, *Dap Dippin'*, don't be surprised if you think you've heard those beats somewhere before. Raw, soulful tracks like that can only have come from a Detroit basement circa 1969, right? "Oh yeah, I know that break..." No, you don't! What you think is an obscure Stax/Volt B-side, or a breakbeat you recognize as having been sampled on an Ice Cube record, is in fact brand spankin' new, a product of the Brooklyn funk enthusiasts at Daptone Records.

Although every record in the Daptone catalog sounds, and more importantly feels, like a well-preserved slice of obscure '60s or '70s soul, label heads Gabriel Roth and Neal Sugarman are far from petty revivalists indulging in fantasies of a bygone era. Their motives, and that of their family of musicians and singers, are pure: they simply want to make the kind of records that they want to hear.

Daptone began in the year 2000 when Roth (who, along with Phillippe Lehman, ran the now-defunct Desco label) hooked up with The Sugarman Three's Neal Sugarman, with the intention of keeping their earnest style of funk music alive. The Sugarman Three had already released two records on Desco, so it seemed a natural move for the two to work together, and indeed their collaboration feels more like a family affair than a business. Run

top-to-bottom out of a two-story house in Bushwick ("basically the ghetto," says Roth), Daptone is a tight-knit group of aficionados who appreciate, and are willing to sacrifice for, in Roth's words, "genuine raw sincere music."

Indeed, musicians, interns and producers all view the Daptone house as simply a place to hang out. "The greatest resource that we have out here is that we have a great family, more than just a stable or a pool," says Roth. "It's a bunch of guys and women that have known each other for a long time and have been making records together for a long time, so when you get into the studio and you're trying to work out an arrangement, everybody's going in the same direction."

So what's the secret to that raw Daptone sound, where the beats jump out of the speakers and every note sounds like it started in New Orleans, hung out in Chicago for a few days, and finally worked its way to Brooklyn by way of Philadelphia? Well, they hit the tape reel hard and use spring and plate reverbs. And they don't use computers at all. But it all boils down to one thing, according to Roth: the musicians. "We use mostly ghetto equipment from the '80s—we don't have all that much fancy vintage stuff," he explains. "The most important thing is that the musicians are playing the right shit. Everybody knows the step."

www.daptonerecords.com

Def Jux's profound and peculiar messenger thinks we're constantly sexing ourselves.

Words: Sarah Bentley



Lyrical contortionist Rob Sonic epitomizes the new school of NYC hip-hoppers, an army of hyper-intelligent wordsmiths making tracks that get your mind as jiggy as your booty.

His self-produced debut solo album, *Telicatessen* (Definitive Jux), is a thought-bending whirlwind of twisted syntax, maven flow and brand new second-hand beats. This explosive combination is earning him props in the city he has spent the past 10 years merely surviving in.

"Before my music took off I was doing all the basic NYC jobs like delivering packages, taking messages, flyering—experiences that made me connect with the city," he explains. "New York is hip-hop—its birthplace, its essence—but it's also home to all other scenes like electroclash, indie rock, dancehall. I mean, when you have this many people living so close together you're bound to be creative or you'd go crazy."

Such a history-filled place often inspires artists to put out clichéd homages to eras

gone by, but Rob is taking his sound to the next level. "I try to not live in the past but to display influences that shape me without repetition," he explains. "Reference but not revoke. That good-time electro sound—before hip-hop was about being a player, when I was a kid—that's what hit me the hardest."

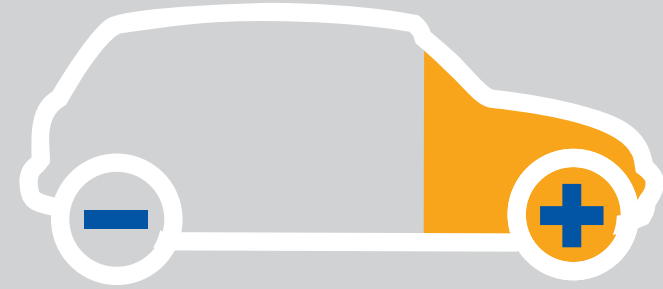
This retro sound plays a huge part in Sonic's production, his beats a tapestry of old synths that evoke '80s arcade game joy alongside techy, Kraftwerk-esque psychedelic futurism. "I have a lot of old equipment like the Arp Odyssey synth. You can't get those sounds anymore so you have to go back and get the real thing."

Of his lyrical style, Rob says, "It's rooted in my subconscious as opposed to academia, and centered around making rebellious, thought-provoking statements.

You're never going to say anything that's not been said before so I twist it and put in my own personality."

"Dylsexia" is a classic example of this, the track biting listeners' membranes to issue a universal comment on the US's reaction to 9/11. "I wrote it three weeks after 9/11. It's a joke loosely based on Americans who can't see the bigger picture. We're kind of flopping ourselves—constantly having sex with ourselves. Look at Manhattan. We've shut down the cabarets, closed all the after-school artists' programs, sold 42nd Street to Disney. Most of the music that has million-dollar promotion behind it is lame. Why is it unacceptable to act like you've got sense?"

Rob Sonic's *Telicatessen* is out now on Definitive Jux. www.definitivejux.com.



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New York's largest public housing structure, where hip-hop legends are born.

Photography: Boogie



"Hip hop was set out in the dark/They used to do it out in the park"
-MC Shan, "The Bridge"

Just across the Queensboro Bridge from Manhattan sits Queensbridge Houses, New York State's largest public housing complex. The facility opened in 1940 during the tenure of Mayor Fiorello H. La Guardia, who made it his goal to provide post-Depression New York with adequate low-income housing. QB's six-story buildings contain 3,142 units and feature elevators that stop only at the first, third and fifth floors (a cost-saving measure proposed by the building's designers). The 50-acre establishment is as imposing as it is a pillar of strength for the generations that have grown up inside its buildings and courtyards.

Left: Queensboro Bridge; Above: Synysta (25 to Life Records)



“Before the BDP conflict with MC Shan/Around the time when Shante dissed the Real Roxanne/I used to wake up every mornin’, see my crew on the block/Every day’s a different plan that had us runnin’ from cops/If it wasn’t hangin’ out in front of cocaine spots/We was at the candy factory, breakin’ the locks” –Nas, “Represent”

Perhaps more famous than Queensbridge’s distinctive “Y”-shaped blocks are the many hip-hop legends that have grown up inside its brick façade. Marley Marl, MC Shan, Roxanne Shanté, Nas, Mobb Deep, Capone-N-Noreaga, Poet, Tragedy and others have made an indelible mark on American music and our understanding of urban living.

Left: Tragedy Khadafi (formerly Intelligent Hoodlum; founder of 25 to Life Records); Above: Queensbridge Houses



"Infamous Queensbridge kid we on the scene kid/Creepin' for those that's caught sleepin"
 –Mobb Deep, "The Start Of Your Ending (41st Side)"

These images by New York-based photographer Boogie represent the multilayered realities of daily life in Queensbridge. Through the course of his four-week photography sessions, Boogie encountered the gambit of obstacles, from nervous subjects to disconnected pagers and inoperable phones. Yet his results offer an intimate look at people and lives as valiant as the buildings they call home.

Above: Poet (legendary Queensbridge MC); Right: Queensbridge courtyard



"You should reach for your goal cause I'm reaching for mine/And I'm from 'The Bridge'"
 –MC Shan, "The Bridge"

Ignore the electronic pulse of the East at your peril.

Words: Brion Paul Photo: Dana Zielinsky



The mere mention of “Sheffield, UK”—with its titillating implications of bleeping and blooping noises and hair-raising Cabaret Voltaire images—is enough to hurl music geeks into enthusiastic and joyous convulsions. Ditto the international imaginations stoked by the mention of “Manchester,” bringing Peter Saville sleeves, post-punk and the Summer of Love zeitgeist to retro fetishists everywhere.

And who could forget to utter “Detroit,” with its Museum of Techno, its rightfully canonized godfathers and car commercial-licensed tracks? Finally, “Chicago”: simply hearing its sonorous name sends me into a time-machine reverie where I’m pillaging the robust shelves of myriad record shops dripping acid house white labels; but it’s 1992, I’m all alone, and no one cares.

Sheffield. Manchester. Detroit. Chicago. All cities whose dutifully documented techno lore passes further into the collective history books of club music. Glaringly absent from that list: New York.

“We really didn’t get any attention in the USA,” says DJ, producer and Industrial Strength label founder Lenny Dee. “In fact, this is probably the first interview that even asked me about this stuff. But, with that said, that rejection and frustration made my music techno.” While other forms of club music undoubtedly ruled the city in the late ‘80s, it was Dee and Brooklyn boy Frankie Bones’ experiments (dating back to 1987) that laid the foundations of New York’s unique breed of techno.

As the ‘80s became the ‘90s, more producers emerged with distinct sonic explorations. Joey Beltram, Gene La Fosse, How & Little, Tommy Musto and Mondo Muzique all started blanketing the city with innovative slabs at a quickening pace, fusing ragged breakbeats, raw 4/4-isms, cerebral string-drenched melodies and acid-tinged, carbonated analogisms.

April of 1990 saw the opening of the Sonic Groove record store, which quickly became the scene’s epicenter. DJ, producer and former graffiti artist Adam X got his start there, and continues to work the counter surrounded by a historical reference library of techno. “Back then the music was moving very fast, unlike now, where you get into one style of music,” recalls Adam. “Music back then used to change every six months—new styles were coming out, new sounds. It was almost competitive to keep the sounds fresh.”

New York’s unique geographic location and its intersection of cultures provided fertile inspiration. Adam explains: “You had the bass and bleeps sound out of Sheffield, which was really big; you had Belgium’s hard beat, dark techno stuff; you had the breakbeat thing. But everybody

was mixing the music together; everything was just really moving fast, faster than it does now.”

Labels like Nu Groove, Apexon, Easy Street, Allabi, and Direct Drive released many of the uncompromising experiments, idealistically free from commercial concerns and pledged to innovative new sounds. International recognition arrived from Belgium’s R&S, who snapped up Mondo Muzique and Beltram; the latter was responsible for creating the historic “Hoover” synth-bass sound, as deployed to devastating affect on his single “Mentasm.”

As Lenny Dee remembers: “The Limelight back in the day, with Jeff Mills, Repeat, Keoki, and Charlie Casanova: that was the place, man!” Dietrich Schoenemann, founder of the sans-computer live band Prototype 909, agrees: “The sound was vast. Tuesday was ‘Communion,’ with industrial meets techno, Wednesday was Disco 2000 with some tweaked techno, and there were Fridays with Mills. The Brooklyn guys doing the Storm events were pushing an even harder edge.”

Those Storm Raves, advertised through the Sonic Groove shop, played a vital role in solidifying the scene. “We started out with 150 people,” remembers Adam, “Then 300, then we started doing them under these bridges in Brooklyn and we were getting 500 people. I’m telling you, in a matter of a year from our first warehouse party in early ‘92, by October we had over 5,000 people. It just grew—it spread like wildfire.”

This influx of people felt techno’s contagious draw. “Storm Rave started a whole new breed of people,” elaborates Adam. “People like John Selway and Oliver Chesler (who recorded as Disintegrator) were coming. And it kept expanding. There was Abe Duque, and Abe was friends with the guys from Prototype 909: Dietrich Schoenemann, Taylor Deupree and Jason “BPMF” Szostek...There aren’t as many new people making techno now. We’re all still around.”

Indeed, familiar faces appear over and over in NYC nightlife, despite the disappearance of dance-friendly clubs, an emergence of bar culture and a crackdown on illegal parties. Things change, as Adam X notes. “I didn’t start going out to bars until I was 26 and 27; they never played techno music at them.” And New York’s techno history has yet to really be written, with so many other names and labels not included here vital to the development of the sound of the city. But don’t worry. As Lenny Dee excitedly puts it, “My clock is still ticking!”

www.sonicgroove.com

◀ Adam X at Sonic Groove

This shaggy-haired power duo straddles the worlds of indie rock, IDM and hip-hop, flying V guitars in hand.

Words: Jonathan Zwickel
Photo: Jessica Miller



▲ Evan Mast (left) and Mike Stroud

It's not hard to imagine two skinny white kids standing out in Crown Heights, Brooklyn. Williamsburg it ain't—this low-key, working-class neighborhood is overwhelmingly Caribbean and Hasidic. Ratatat's Evan Mast and Mike Stroud are the only exceptions on their block. "Girls in our neighborhood don't even look at us," says Stroud. "Both of us get called 'Shaggy,'" adds Mast.

The description is money—these guys do exude a stubbly, ruffled nonchalance—but it misses a key point. As the two-man micro-rock outfit known as Ratatat, Mast and Stroud have produced the year's most ambitious urban symphony. Utilizing guitar, bass, keys, and sequencers, their self-titled debut braids strands of soaring analog melody with glitchy, lo-fi beats.

"The very first song we made together," says Stroud, "we really didn't even know each other." It was the end of 2002 and guitarist Stroud had just finished touring with Dashboard Confessional. He hooked up with Mast, a laptop producer who'd previously worked under the name E*Vax. "We did a very baroque sounding thing, lots of harpsichord," says Mast. "We kind of ripped off the key change at the end of 'The Thong Song.' We were just fucking around, recording in the bedroom of my apartment. I had a laptop and a keyboard, and we were borrowing my roommate's bass. After '17 Years,' that's when we sort of knew we had something."

Mast and Stroud signed to XL and slowly finished the remain-

der of their self-titled album, a gutsy IDM/hip-hop/prog rock collision that waltzes like a warm-blooded android, full of heart and hard wiring. Its emotions shift from fist-pumping to chin-stroking; and, although the music is somewhat limited by its instrumentation, the depth of songwriting and distinctive vision behind it reveals huge potential.

That potential came to light recently on *Remix Mixtape Vol. 1*, an artful mashup of Ratatat's moody bounce with acapellas by major-league rappers. Jay-Z, Kanye, Ghostface Killah, G-Unit, and Dizzee all get gunned down by Ratatat's brainy arrangements, and you haven't really heard a Missy Elliot remake until you've checked Ratatat's spin on "I'm Really Hot." If it seems Mast and Stroud intentionally chose the bling over the backpack, that's not exactly the case. "We were kinda just going for what we could find," Mast admits of the acapellas, which only big-money radio artists can usually afford to release. "It's not really the kind of hip-hop we listen to."

The two have been checking out a lot of Ghostface during their current tour, though, and were psyched to meet Beanie Siegel at a party in New York. "We got to wear his gold," says Stroud. "He was just really cool. We gave him a tape of the mix and some headphones and he started freestyling over it."

www.audioregs.com, www.ratatatmusic.com, www.xl-recordings.com.

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www.COUNTERFLOWRECORDINGS.COM

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NEW RELEASES

BLAZE
Keep Hope Alive (OUT 9.24.04)

A Who's Who of some of the most celebrated vocalists in modern dance music including Kevin Hedge & Josh Milan of Blaze, Kenny Bobien, Joi Cardwell, Ultra Nate, Byron Stingily, and Barbara Tucker come together with 10 all-new exclusive tracks to benefit LIFEbeat (The Music Industry Fights AIDS).

MIX THE VIBE
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The latest in King Street's esteemed Mix The Vibe series featuring tracks and mixes from Harry "Choo-Choo" Romero, Roy Davis, Jr. and Tiefschwarz, plus exclusive Mondo Grosso re-edits!

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MATEO & MATOS
Essential Elements OUT NOW

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King Tubby meets François Kevorkian in downtown Manhattan.



Words: Mike Gwertzman



He's worn many hats throughout his nearly 30-year career in dance music, from DJ to remixer to producer to label boss. But it's the one that François Kevorkian's been wearing every Monday night in New York City for the last year and a half that he's the proudest of.

On Mondays, Kevorkian's been putting on a captain's hat and setting a course for the cosmos. The intimate Meatpacking district club Cielo is his vessel, the crowd his passengers, the DJ booth his command deck, and the destination is Deep Space. The mission: explore and celebrate all things dub in music, uniting disparate genres and styles through dub's spacey, outer-world aesthetic.

With an unheralded, low-key start in April 2003, FK's Deep Space party has steadily become one of New York's top nights, drawing a loyal crowd of regulars and a steady stream of out-of-towners. The night is an ideal mingling of environment and entertainment, with Cielo's ultra-cool, cozy and minimalist interior (in a *Buck Rogers* disco scene sort of way) and crystal-clear Funktion One sound system providing the perfect backdrop for FK's boundary-busting sets.

On any given Monday, FK might be playing Maurizio and Basic Channel, plus a bit of Lee Perry and traditional Jamaican dub. But he's just as likely to drop Beyonce, The Doors, Otis Redding and Sun Ra, and follow that up with Stevie Wonder, The Police and Stravinsky. It's an eclectic playlist, but it's not eclectic for eclectic's sake; FK's dub aesthetic and space-travel theme manage tie everything together. Helping to connect the dots are FK's live dub mixing techniques; he works with a variety of processors

and delays inside the booth, turning in real-time remixes and re-edits of familiar tracks.

"We've managed to gain people's trust," Kevorkian says, acknowledging that, at first, many came expecting to hear a more focused musical night. "I think Deep Space is thriving on providing people with an experience where they don't really know what's going to happen."

That's been refreshing for many clubbers who are used to club nights based around one sound or style. And it's attracted many like-minded DJs and performers, with guests including DJ Harvey, Boozou Bajou, dub poet Mutabaruka, Alex from Tokyo, and locals MKL and Adam Scott.

For FK, the journey is just getting started. He's started up a Deep Space imprint, with releases from Beat Pharmacy, collaborations with U-Roy and a Deep Space mix CD on the way. And he's looking forward to more guest DJs and bringing the Deep Space experience to other cities.

Despite a hectic touring schedule that sends him off to Asia or Europe nearly every weekend, Kevorkian relishes his dub workouts on Monday nights. "After all these years of doing all these things, I can honestly and truthfully say that I claim that little rock as mine, where I can play just about anything I want that I feel is relevant."

www.deepspaceny.com



▲ François Kevorkian and DJ Harvey; black light on the Deep Space dancefloor; MKL and Funmi; Mutabaruka

From radio waves to waves on the Hudson, Jeannie Hopper goes with the flow.

Words: Tamara Warren
Photo: Kareem Black

Jeannie Hopper is a good talker. Words come easy to the DJ and promoter extraordinaire, especially after 17 years on the air as host of the radio program Liquid Sound Lounge (every Saturday on WBAI Pacifica in New York City). Her primetime show is the longest running in New York and features an array of music, poets and discussion of politically relevant topics.

"I started out as a political reporter and an activist," Hopper says. "I was a radio producer and I know people who live alternative lifestyles who like to go to clubs. The two merged together when the station said 'do a show,' and I've carried that on throughout the years."

But Hopper's fingers do a lot of her talking for her; her more recent success on live dancefloors has found her toting vinyl on the international DJ circuit. "Being on WBAI and playing independent artists on the radio [is] what created the unique sound that people say I have," she says. "People find comfort in the familiar, but you've got to push yourself in new things and diversity. I tell people I would be bored with one style."

The Milwaukee native came to New York to attend college, and wound up sticking around, becoming entrenched in several different communities. But she had already cultivated her love for club music elsewhere. "Where I got my exposure to amazing music was at the roller skating rink," Hopper enthuses. "There were a lot of records [played there] you wouldn't hear on the radio in the Midwest."

Hopper has long had a presence behind the scenes in New York music. She runs the Liquid Sound Lounge record label and promotions company, which helped break Jamiroquai. She's finishing up a continuous mix for Blaze's *Keep Hope Alive* album project that will benefit LIFEbeat (the music industry's organization for fighting AIDS) in addition to organizing the *Outrageous Compilation*, a collective effort that will benefit the Drug Policy Alliance, a group that advocates against anti-clubbing legislation. Blaze, DJ Spinna, Rich Medina,



Turntables on the Hudson, Garth Trinidad and Julius Papp are all contributing tracks to the benefit CD.

Her Liquid Sound Lounge boat parties top a list of events that preserve New York's special vibe, with the sixth annual installment scheduled for this month. "On our last

boat cruise people were like, 'Wow, you play a range of music and it fits together seamlessly with such a great flow up and down!' Soulful funky music with a good rhythm is the key. Music shouldn't be predictable."

www.liquidsoundlounge.com

DEAD COMBO

A pair of Finnish lushes whip feedback and leather into a louche sonic cocktail.

Words: Brion Paul



▲ Nuutti (left) and Harri

A Moog roars, its bass burrowing hallowed, hollowed sine waves underneath feedbacking power-strummed, carbon-coated guitar riffage. Upfront thudding drum machines purr alongside growling, echo-drenched vocals, delivered by two imposing-looking, tattooed, slick-haired Finnish expats now residing in New York. This, people of the world, is the Dead Combo experience.

These two excessively leather-clad lads, Harri and Nuutti, delicately adhere their electronic sounds together with thick swatches of duct tape—not surprising, given Nuutti’s almost biblical explanation of their hasty formation. “It was the end of 2001,” he begins. “Harri and I were drinking and partying, and in a drunken state we promised to play a friend’s party. In the morning we realized we had only a week to go, so we started jamming out on some old shit from A-DAT tapes from about five years ago. We rehearsed seven days and the show was on the eighth day. And that was the first Dead Combo show.”

As future shows (including one at the legendary CBGB) have proven, Dead Combo possesses a certain genetic fingerprint of the great city they now call home. This is due in no small part to the birth here of O.G. synth-punks Suicide, one of the duo’s main influences. “Well, I think we aren’t the most original, most underground (band),” Nuutti modestly attests, “but we *are* doing something that we like right now and we aren’t trying to jump on the disco train.”

Evidently, the pair’s music proved original enough for Output Recordings head honcho Trevor Jackson. He jumped on the Dead Combo train, issuing a highly coveted silkscreened promo-only 7” of “You Don’t Look So Good,” a 12-inch of electro-overhauls, and the soon-to-be-released debut LP, which contains enough bombast to please the punks and enough oscillated discoid gurgles to please the synth lover, all revealing the influence of the city in which it was constructed.

“New York City is not one of the easiest places to be,” Nuutti says of his environs. “It is very, very expensive to live: all the affordable apartments are small and you have to share with someone. To find a place to rehearse and explore your sound adds extra to a cost that is already sky high. Although, lots of pressure and unavailability gives you harder results. I guess being broke and living in a hot box in NYC can do something to you.”

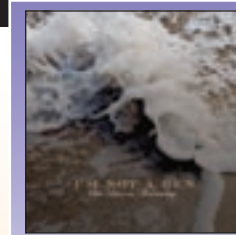
It sure does. It makes you fucking rock.

Dead Combo’s self-titled debut is out October 5 on Output. www.outputrecordings.com



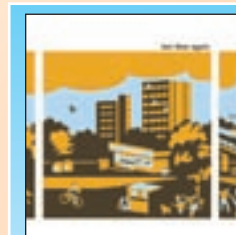
KIKI
Run With Me
CD/2LP

This native Finn, currently residing in Berlin, is an internationally known DJ that has been producing music for BPitch Control over the last three years. Following five EPs, BPC is proud to unleash his debut album, full of strings, hard beats, harmonic aesthetics, floating dub hi-hats and a driving bass that rarely lets up.



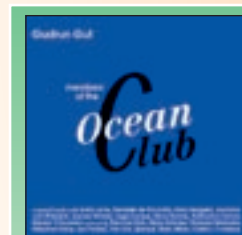
I'M NOT A GUN
Our Lives on Wednesdays
CD/LP

On their second album, **John Tejada** and **Takeshi Nishimoto** take postrock into an electronic future, the genre has long been waiting for. Just drift and win.



VARIOUS
But Then Again
CD

Featuring unreleased tracks by **Jan Jelinek**, **Thomas Fehlmann**, **John Tejada**, **Headset**, **Deadbeat**, **Bus+Dabrye**, **Rechenzentrum vs. Masha Orella** and many more: celebrating 5 years of —scape! Watch out for upcoming US dates: www.scape-music.de



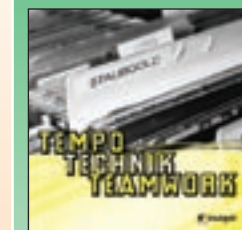
GUDRUN GUT
Members of the Oceanclub
2CD

We celebrate 10 years of the Oceanclub with the re-release of these original tracks from Gudrun Gut in collaboration with artists such as **Anita Lane**, **Blixa Bargeld**, **Inga Humpe**, **Myra Davies**, etc... plus an extra CD with the 1996 remixes by **Paul van Dyk**, **Klaus Schulze**, **Thomas Fehlmann**, **Ian Pooley**, **The Orb**, **Ellen Allien**... Includes 3 stunning videos. A double CD priced as one. (Moabit)



LUTHER & TOBY
Karny Sutra
CD

Luther Hawkins & Toby Dammit join with Grammy Award winning producer Mark Howard making their debut duet album. The result is an intoxicating instrumental adventure into paradise and mystery.



VARIOUS
Tempo Technik Teamwork
2CD

Double cd compilation with 26 tracks for a special price. Includes new and unreleased tracks by **Ekkehard Ehlers** and **John Fruiscente** (Red Hot Chili Peppers), **Kammerflimmer Kollektief**, **Sun**, **Klangwart**, and many more. Staubgold vigorously pursues the ideas of musical openness and blurred boundaries of musical genres, a spectrum and individuality that defy any attempts at categorization.



TONETRAEGER
This is Not Here
CD

Second album from this Düsseldorf duo, featuring Volker Bertelmann of **Hauschka** and **Music A.M.** fame, conjures up the most improbable pop music imaginable. Manufactured for the most part "by hand", though not entirely foregoing the lure of electronics, and assisted by members of **Tarwater** and **Kreidler**, they have come up with an impressive work, bound neither by time nor space, fit to break hearts, crack nuts and move mountains. (Quatermass)



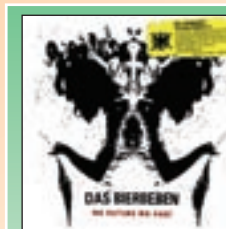
DNA
DNA on DNA
CD

The definitive 32 track compilation including ALL of the material recorded by this groundbreaking group plus many previously unreleased tracks. Imitators beware!!!



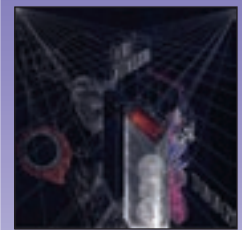
BIOSPHERE
Autour de la Lune
CD

Widely regarded as one of Norwegian electronic music's most important artists, this new release is set to compete with **Brian Eno's** "Apollo" recordings as the definitive homage to the space age.



DAS BEIRBEBEN
No Future No Past
CD/2LP

A voracious appetite for destruction, 'The Beerdrinkers' exit the dance clubs of Germany, with punk rock in hand, and proceed to fuse it's electronic glam sound to pure, grounded fury. A poetic album for the modern dissident ethos.



TOOG
Lou Etendue
CD/LP

Third album from this French musician and poet continues an exploration of electronic yet often surreal **chansons**. In collaboration with sound artist **Digiki**, he delivers a subtle mix of lyrics, melodies and sound glitching. Influenced by a collection of poems by the poet **Guillaume Appollinaire** and featuring the vocal talents of the one and only **Asia Argento**.



ELLEN ALLIEN
My Parade
CD

On the new mix-CD, we witness her first big love for the Beats 'n' Breaks, which weaves through her musical in/output over the last twelve years like a red thread. Ellen says: "I love Techno! Club me, I club You! Dance with me, break with me, rock with me...!!!" Features **Midi Rain**, **Wildplanet**, **Apparat**, **Step Time Orchestra**, **Ellen Allien**, **Andre Estermann** and more.



Twins storm the charts with a pop-ragga anthem that fans are singing in Lebanon.

Words: Mark Pytlik Illustration: Volumeone

Last summer Spanish Harlem R&B star Lumidee's "Never Leave You" rode the ubiquitous Diwali riddim to become one of '03's most defining tracks. This year Queens natives Nina Sky's "Move Ya Body" has tapped this year's choicest riddim (Scatta Burrell's Coolie Dance) to similar effect. But unlike Lumidee, whose shaky vocal delivery made it easy to imagine that she'd be vapor by the time the ice cream trucks were driven back to storage, Nina Sky seems poised for something like longevity.

Comprised of 18-year-old identical twins Natalie and Nicole Albino (they got "Nina" by combining their given names and chased it with "Sky" to represent their ambition), the duo set out to make music as eclectic and as full-bodied as the records they grew up listening to. On their self-titled debut, the pair pulls from dancehall, R&B, soul and hip-hop with equal dexterity; it's a familiarity they attribute to the musical education conferred on them by their stepfather, a DJ, and their childhood surroundings. "We grew up in a really diverse neighborhood in Astoria," Natalie explains. "There were a lot of Greek people, Spanish, white, black, so we got to know a lot about different cultures and appreciate all different kinds of music because we heard it every day."

"We grew up with Bob Marley, Sean Paul's earlier stuff and Buju Banton, so we've always listened to dancehall music," says Nicole of the pair's unlikely first single, which came about at the behest of co-producer and Hot 97 DJ Cipha Sounds. "He was like 'I have this riddim, the Coolie Dance, and I want you guys to write to it and we'll see what happens,'" she recalls. "It was just an idea, but we wrote the song and recorded it and the next day he left me a message saying 'Nicole, I just heard the track, and you have no idea how big it's going to be.'"

In many ways, they still don't—so massive and widespread is the song's success that they're having trouble putting it all into context; fortunately, they've got a full album's worth of songs to concentrate on now. "To know that it's playing anywhere other than New York is weird," Natalie muses. "I hear it all the time," Nicole adds. "I was in Footlocker the other day and I saw the video on TV. But maybe the strangest thing I've heard was that it was number two in Lebanon. I've never been to Lebanon. I have no idea what Lebanon is like, what the culture is like, and yet that song's number two there. That shows you—music's universal."

www.ninasky.com



PAUL NICE

A hip-hop nice guy finishes first.

Words: DJ Anna Photo: Jessica Miller

Amid the flurry of Jay-Z remixes to resurface in the last year, one stood out among the rest, a fully realized masterpiece innocuously titled *Unofficial Black Album Remix*. Joan Jett gave Hova a run for his money on a remix of "99 Problems" and "Lucifer" got the reggae treatment. Was it some up and coming young buck fresh on the scene? No, it was just the latest funky installment from the legendary DJ Paul Nice.

Paul Kilianski (a.k.a. Paul Nice), 36, grew up an hour north of the big city in Poughkeepsie, New York. As a 15-year-old heavy metal fan, Kilianski used to take the train to Times Square with his friends to see kung fu flicks. What started as a love for kung fu movies led to a love of hip-hop as Kilianski started to visit the Music Factory on 42nd Street, hunting down the tracks he heard on Kiss FM and WBLS. Soon Kilianski was playing records at house parties and community centers near his home, and the purchase of an MPC60 sampler led to his first white label 12" release, entitled "Beats Anonymous." The breakbeat record was a minor hit among radio DJs like Funkmaster Flex, and Kilianski soon found himself making beats for essential New York MCs including AG, Guru, Masta Ace, Beastie Boys, Lord Finesse and Biz Markie, to name a few.

Kilianski eventually moved to Manhattan to share an apartment with his friend, ragamuffin star Jamalski. It was the mid-'90s and Kilianski started touring the world the day after he moved in. "I pull up to the apartment and Jamal comes running down the steps, saying 'Paul, did you bring your passport?' 'Why?' 'We're going to Japan tomorrow' 'Oh, shit'. The next morning we're on a plane to Japan. Not knowing what we're going out there for, I just put some records together. So we find out we're opening for Craig Mack and we're actually—get this—replacing Biggie Smalls. This was the week 'Big Poppa' blew up. They were expecting Biggie Smalls and they got Jamalski and Paul Nice."

In 1998, Kilianski's career came 360 degrees with the release of *5 Fingers of Death*, an ode to his favorite kung fu films that became an instant classic among DJs and turntablists like Q-Bert and Mixmaster Mike. The success of *5 Fingers of Death* spawned four volumes and led to the

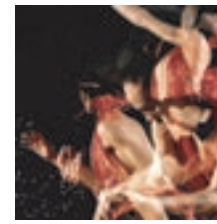


release of other breakbeat smorgasbords like *Drum Library* and *Ultimate Block Party Breaks*.

These days, Kilianski is back in Poughkeepsie. A flurry of new projects keeps him busy, and while he watches his beloved New York City become less and less like it was back in the day, he contemplates a

move out West. But he always knows where his center is: "New York is a city in a constant state of flux. It's always changing, but New York is my heart—it's my home."

Paul Nice's *Journey to the Centre of the Beats* mixed CD is out soon on Antidote Records. www.paulnice.com



OUT NOW:
DJ RELS
THEME FOR A BROKEN SOUL

A hazy, funky collection of hip-hop inspired, futuristic instrumentals from the mind of the reclusive desert-dwelling DJ Rels. With this new album, executive produced by Madlib, Rels is opening up new doors for a hip hop label with progressive dance music that draws from both the jazzier and more electronic of the Stones Throw tradition. A project that is pensive and reflective, yet energetic and danceable at the same time.

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DVD & CD

Stones Throw celebrates its 100th release with a DVD collection of all of our videos, including new ones from Madvillain, Gary Wilson, Koushik, plus other previously unseen bonus features, and a Stones Throw Mix CD by Peanut Butter Wolf.



OUT NOW:
GARY WILSON
MARY HAD BROWN HAIR

"If the offspring of Elvis Costello were hired to make some 70's funk-porn but ran into a bunch of CBGB's punks doing an impersonation of New Wave...then here you have Gary Wilson"
- ?uestlove (Esquire, 7/04)

OHNO

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STONES THROW RECORDS www.stonesthrow.com



Dan Selzer resurrects No Wave just in the nick of time.

Words: Tony Ware Photo: Ann Treasure



▲ Metal Urbain

“There will always be a place for record collectors, there’s no shame in that game,” says Dan Selzer, founder of New York-based Acute Records.

“But the purpose of Acute is to do more than collect music; it’s to introduce music for people to learn from, enjoy, take and do something with.”

Perhaps one of the greatest factors in Selzer’s desire to share music comes from having to watch it sit unappreciated. This Jersey native watched a copy of *LAge D’Or* by French metronomic maelstrom Metal Urbain sit in Dave Todarello’s Co-Op Record Store in Oberlin, OH, for four years; he finally purchased it when he graduated from Oberlin College in 1997 and moved to Brooklyn. In between, Selzer would borrow the copy to play on his WOBC radio show—alongside works by This Heat, The Homosexuals, The Fall, A Certain Ratio, Pere Ubu, Desperate Bicycles, Fire Engines and The Styrenes. He knew the impact these experimental yet accessible impulses could have if they traveled beyond the network of record collectors and into the hands of mere music fans.

Years later (in 2003), Selzer released Metal Urbain’s *Anarchy in Paris* on his Acute imprint, in between resurrecting a series of Glenn Branca/Theoretical Girls CDs. Named as a skewed homage to DIY pioneer Thomas Leer’s label Oblique, Acute stemmed from Selzer’s love of compiling tracks for friends and fellow appreciators, having himself been introduced to so much formative music by compilations including seminal No Wave compendium *No New York*, ROIR’s *The Great NY Singles Scene*,

Rough Trade’s *Wanna Buy a Bridge?* and Cherry Red’s *Seeds* series.

Of course, ideas are easy. Production, distribution, promotion, that’s another story. Enter Todd Hyman, founder of New York’s Carpark Records. Journalist Simon Reynolds introduced Hyman and Selzer at Selzer’s well-known and respected Transmission night at Plant Bar. Hyman had received a similar musical education through radio station and record store work while at Northwestern, but had also amassed significant record company experience. “Dan has the exhaustive knowledge of Acute’s period of interest, and has so many ideas for projects, but he runs them by me so we can figure out together how the sounds are connecting to what’s contemporary,” says Hyman.

While both Selzer and Hyman joke about a potential trilogy of labels—Acute, Obtuse and Right—they actually take the act of selecting projects very seriously. “We consider historical relevance highly,” says Selzer, “following the natural progression of post-punk. But Acute releases never forget that pop tinge that makes the records easier for more people to relate to.”

www.acuterecords.com

Two Antipop Consortium veterans steer their hip-hop flight in a new direction.

Words: Jesse Serwer
Photo: Jessica Miller

Geographically speaking, Manhattan’s Bryant Park could be exactly halfway between Roosevelt, Long Island, and upstate White Plains. Which makes the 42nd Street park—the site of New York’s annual Fashion Week clothing extravaganza, in the shadow of the monolithic New York Public Library—the ideal meeting spot for the members of left-of-center hip-hop duo Airborn Audio. Though both are originally from the city that still heavily colors their lives and music, the pensive, reserved High Priest (Kyle Scott) lives in Roosevelt, while the ball of energy that is M. Sayyid (Maurice Green) holds down Westchester County.

“Bryant Park has always been this place of meeting for us, going back to Antipop,” Sayyid says, taking in the grounds on a seasonably comfortable July afternoon, while acknowledging the demise of the duo’s relationship with their former Antipop Consortium partner, Beans.

Family men with two kids apiece, MC/producers Priest and Sayyid constructed Airborn Audio’s debut, *Good Fortune*, at home studio setups in their respective locales (“*Hunched back in the suburbs on computers*,” Sayyid spits on standout track “Inside The Globe”), meeting up midway when they could, but mostly driving an hour or two to each others’ homes.

On this particular day, Priest has had to bail to handle a minor child-care matter, but a relatively smooth rush-hour ride through Manhattan in Sayyid’s Honda CR-V provides an introduction to the freshly completed tracks of *Good Fortune*, slated for November release on Ninja Tune. “To do what we wanted, we had to control everything, so I schooled myself on engineering while we were working,” Sayyid explains. “That’s part of why this album took a while, but it allowed us to step further into the realm of experimentation.”

Reached at home a few days later, criminally underrated producer and vintage synth hound Priest explains the dubby, atmospheric depth the group gained from recording and



▲ M. Sayyid (left) and High Priest

mixing their own vocals: “This album was the difference between going to a barbershop and cutting your own hair.”

Any discussion of Airborn naturally floats back to Antipop Consortium, which dissolved in the summer of 2002 after growing from a loose-knit mix-tape unit to a lauded Warp Records act who toured with Radiohead. After the group’s demise, Priest and Sayyid seemingly disappeared while Beans re-emerged almost immediately.

“Basically, we decided to pop out for a while, keep doing what we were doing with Antipop, and change the address,” Sayyid says. “We’re sticking to the agenda that we came into the game with, and taking it further. It’s all about getting that balance between experimentation and staying in the pocket in a way that is accessible to the heads. To us, that’s the most important thing.”

www.ninjatune.net, www.airbornaudio.com

THE GLASS

Dominique Keegan and Glen Brady make electronic punk that's far from see-through.



▲ Glen Brady (left) and Dominique Keegan

"I was just watching [the Stephen King movie] *Pet Sematary*," exclaims Glen Brady, one half of The Glass, when we sit down to dinner in the East Village. "It's amazing—every song has one of our basslines in it!" Comparing the two is apt—composer Elliot Goldenthal's dark thumps, moody synths and playfully eerie atmospheres have a lot in common with The Glass' punk dance stew.

The Glass is the sum of Brady and partner Dominique Keegan's relative pedigrees: Brady (alias DJ Wool) is a veteran hip-hop and rock producer and the 1998 Irish DMC Battle champion, while songwriter/bass player Keegan runs the Plant imprint (responsible for the popular *The Sound of Young New York* compilation series). Their records—like current single "Won't Bother Me"—meld the dark lyricism of Jesus & Mary Chain, the insistent pulse of New Order and the low-end theories of A Tribe Called Quest with punk attitude.

The pair's roots stretch back to Dublin, Ireland, where, in 1991, Trinity

Words: Tyra Bangs
Photo: Kareem Black

College student Keegan enlisted Brady to MC for his hip-hop band. Keegan eventually moved to New York City, but kept in touch with Brady, who produced various "trip-hoppy breaks records" for his fledgling Plant label, started in 1997 with partner Marcus Lambkin. The label was put on hiatus to party, with Keegan running Plant Bar, which became famous for its all-night ragers and \$10,000, James Murphy-designed sound system before Cabaret Law crackdowns killed it.

Luckily, the bar's demise coincided with the upswing of dance rock, kick-started in part by Keegan's friends at DFA. "I was definitely inspired by seeing The Rapture go from being a full-on punk band to a dance band," he says. "It went a long way towards getting me enthusiastic to make music again." Keegan hooked up with Brady, who had moved to Brooklyn, and the stage was set for The Glass to break.

The group melds rock influences with electronic music in a familiar way, but The Glass members aren't *exactly* channeling their childhood influences, explains Brady. "Right now, we're listening to a lot of the very English '80s pop music that was around when we were kids, like The Cure. I wasn't really into that music back then—I was more into Eric B & Rakim and early electro—but you were around this other music so much it's like you've absorbed it by osmosis. [The Glass] is about this idea of boyishness; listening to the music of 12 or 14 years ago through the filter of now."

"Won't Bother Me" (Plant) and The Glass remix of D'Boldiss' "Freak Huh" (Coco Machete) are out now, as is *The Sound of Young New York 2* (Plant). The Glass' full-length debut is due out in early 2005. www.plantmusic.com



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Talk about ill communication, here's an artist who's everywhere at once.

Words: Stephen Christian
Photo: Peter Sutherland



Bill McMullen is that rare breed of city dweller that has managed to make a living off of his artistic talents while jumping between street-level art and pop culture touchstones. From the streetwear brand SwishNYC he founded to designing Def Jam ad campaigns to sardine-canning the Beastie Boys on the cover of *Hello Nasty*—a graphic that was near-ubiquitous in the summer of '98—you've probably absorbed McMullen's work by osmosis.

After a childhood full of drawing and doodling, McMullen made the leap into the cutthroat world of...collegiate periodicals. "I started working at the school newspaper doing art direction for the entertainment section," he says. "I was also DJing and I did flyers for the clubs I was DJing at and for friends of mine." After college, McMullen knew it was time to jet from San Diego to somewhere more cosmopolitan. "I decided I needed to move to either London or New York and I didn't think I could fig-

ure out how to live in London."

Once in the Rotten Apple, McMullen linked up with a friend in Def Jam's art department and ended up working at the hip-hop titan for three years, putting together album artwork and ad campaigns for some of the world's biggest hip-hop stars. "I'm a really big hip-hop fan and that was always one of my favorite labels and to actually move to New York and start working there was pretty cool," he offers.

Eventually it was time for McMullen to move on again, but not before he came across some interesting Def Jam office gossip. McMullen learned that much of the artwork for each of the Beastie Boys' albums had been done very last minute. Knowing that the release of *Hello Nasty* was dawning, Bill linked up with the three MCs and the result is probably sitting in your CD tower right now.

From there, McMullen's free time dwindled while his output multiplied. Witty t-

shirts juxtaposing *Star Wars* stormtroopers with the members of KISS, lo-fi video teasers for the Beasties' latest album and a *Star Wars* toy mutated with an Adidas shelltoe all followed. Recent projects have included a foray into music as Billions McMillions (on the Tarantino-inspired hip-hop album, *Hanzo Steel*) and a video for the top secret DVD version of the Beastie Boys' *To The Five Boroughs*. "Maybe I shouldn't be talking about it," whispers McMullen. "If Yauch (Beastie Boy MCA) sees this he might get upset, but the idea is that a bunch of artists will do videos so they can have a complete visual version of the album."

While all of this hanging with rap legends and youth culture jet-setting sounds exciting, McMullen's low-key persona comes out as he describes his trade. "It all sounds more glamorous than it actually is," he shrugs. "It's just really sitting around in Photoshop all the time."

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El Presidente: Stüssy hoodie;
IRAK t-shirt and jewelry; Rag and
Bone jeans; Nixon watch



Keefe: vintage Metallica t-shirt; Stüssy jacket; Levi's® alife custom 501®'s; Nike shoes
Ricky: Stüssy hoodie; Alife t-shirt; Levi's® alife custom 501®'s; Nike shoes
Jamie: Stüssy hat; Ojas t-shirt; Levi's® alife custom 501®'s; Nike shoes
Demaney: Alife t-shirt; Stüssy sweater; Levi's® alife custom 501®'s; Nike shoes
Dave: Stüssy hat; vintage Def Leppard t-shirt; Levi's® alife custom 501®'s; Vans shoes



Jessie (this page): Marmalade NYC sweater and fanny pack; Miss Sixty jeans; model's own moccasins
 Taz (opposite page): Stüssy shirt; Surface To Air t-shirt; Energi pants; Fendi scarf; Gucci belt
 Rajiah: Judi Rosen jumper; Eniko Bazsa vest; Marmalade NYC necklace and boots



James Jebbia reinvents streetwear at his SoHo skate outpost.

Words: Roy Dank Photo: Dana Zielinsky



Twice a year the Supreme shop on Lafayette Street in SoHo closes down for about a week in between clothing seasons.

And twice a year, a gaggle of streetwear-obsessed kids assemble in front of the store the morning Supreme reopens. It's a phenomenon that happens without fail, and is a testament to the threads, boards and accessories the shop's been boasting for a decade now.

James Jebbia opened Supreme's doors in 1994, at a time when skateboarding lacked much of the ubiquity it currently enjoys. Jebbia had been in the streetwear game for a while by this point, having opened the revered Union store in 1989 as well as the Stüssy store in New York in 1991, and he saw a void in the New York skateboarding community. Sure, there were kids killing it on the streets, and more and more pros came out of the Big Apple, but by and large skate shops came and went. After opening, Supreme quickly became *the* place where all the kids would hook up to go skate.

But this was only part of the Supreme story. The store produced its own line of top quality, graphic-based t-shirts, kicked off with a design bearing Supreme's bold red-and-white logo, inspired by the work of artist Barbara Kruger. Quite high-concept for a skate shop to say the least, and something the store's continued to further each year.

"With Supreme, I saw a lot of the creativity coming out of skateboarding with the graphics and hard goods," Jebbia says. "I wanted to do something authentic. The staff really helped and guided that. Just because kids skate doesn't mean we have to dumb it down or present it as less than anything else."

From skateboard decks designed by Ryan McGinness, Kaws and Rammellzee, to calen-

dars shot by Terry Richardson and Jamil GS, to their full line of cut-and-sew garments and their signature backpacks and wallets, Supreme has become one of the most coveted streetwear brands. Arguably, Jebbia played a crucial role in formalizing the nascent streetwear movement that grew out of both the skate and surfwear scenes of the 1980s, and also the b-boy look that emerged from New York around the same time. Nevertheless, Jebbia's quick to point out that there's no master plan at work here. "Please don't make me sound like I know what I'm doing," he says.

Supreme is located at 274 Lafayette St. at Prince, SoHo. They just opened a new shop on Fairfax Ave. in Los Angeles, and will be releasing their 2005 calendar (shot by Larry Clark) soon.

Meet the fearless leader of downtown NY's rock 'n' roll ruckus.

Words: Vivian Host Photo: Jessica Miller
Hair: Jared Gomez for Dandee Salon Make-Up: Darian

If you walked out of the theater after *Party Monster* misty-eyed for the halcyon club kid days of the early '90s, then dry your eyes. There may not be many stacked platforms or angel wings at Motherfucker, but there's enough glitter, drama and pan-sexual downtown NYC glamour to rival those *other* great parties of the 20th century.

And behind the DJ booth at the four-year-old rock 'n' roll nightclub Motherfucker is where you'll find Justine D, in a prom dress, with X-Ray Spex on one deck and Ministry on the other, and a Zongamin remix in hand. Or you might find her ruling things on Saturday nights at Tiswas, an indie rock club she's DJed and hosted (with Nick Marc) since 1995. That is, when she's not a fixture at Making Time in Philly, opening for bands like Interpol and Ratatat, or playing fashion shows. If the concept of the "It" girl didn't go out with Chloe Sevigny, then the tag certainly fits.

A native of Chinatown, Justine started sneaking out of the house to party in the Lower East Side at the age of 14. She's since moved out to the considerably quieter Park Slope, but apparently that's the only thing that's calmed down. Along with partners Michael T., Georgie Seville and Johnny T, there's a lot of work that goes into throwing a roving party that succeeds at bringing "all subcultures together under one roof: goth, punk, old, gay, straight, young hipsters, mods and drag queens." Justine typically books the bands—which have included ESG, The Rapture and The Ssion—and though she claims to be known as the "sober, uptight partner," her wild nights are wilder than most peoples'.

"The night we had at Centrofly was perfect," she recounts. "The band was amazing, the vibe was perfect and at the end of the night Michael and I locked ourselves in the DJ booth like we usually do with a few close friends. Sometimes on the dancefloor the energy comes together and this energy was sexual. I knew Michael felt it, he was making out with two differ-



ent people in the booth while spinning Lil' Louie Vega's 'French Kiss.' I was watching him and making eyes to someone on the dancefloor. It seemed very decadent and classic, like the days of Paradise Garage, when it was about good music, sex and drugs. I felt like I was in a time warp—not the sterile New York club scene of 2004."

www.motherfuckernyc.com, www.tiswasnyc.com

Check the producer who mines sparkling jazz hip-hop gemstones.

Words: Mark Pytlik Photo: Jessica Miller

For someone who claims he's just getting started, visual artist and hip-hop producer Gerard Young (who produces as Ge-Ology) boasts an impressive background. As a teenager in New York, he formed the hip-hop group Born Busy with three other classmates, one of whom was 13-year-old Tupac Shakur. With Young providing beats, the quartet demolished all comers on the local battle scene and collaborated on Shakur's earliest recorded material. "We knew we had talent because there were so many times we had to battle cats all through the city and motherfuckers was getting burnt," he reminisces. "They couldn't fuck with us! It was real dope, and a lot of fun."

Once high school ended, Young found himself at a crossroads. Inspired by the city's graffiti circuit, he decided to put music on the backburner and enroll in art school. He recalls the dying days of New York's street art renaissance with fondness. "It was really the perfect time for me to live here," he sighs. "I got to experience things that people who live here now [don't]. To see cars with top to bottom graf on the sides, to actually be on trains that still had graf on them—it was the end of an era, they was buffing all the trains and phasing it out. I caught the tail end of those days."

After graduating in '93, Young joined forces with the late artist Matt "Doo" Reid to co-found hip-hop art project Dooable Arts. Although the venture only lasted a few years, it helped Young establish himself as a visual artist. By the late '90s, he'd learned to juggle both facets of his career; in addition to contributing artwork to everyone from K-Swiss to H&M to Rawkus Records, Young began producing one-offs for the likes of Mos Def and Talib Kweli, Apani B-Fly and Medina Green.

Fast-forward to 2004, and the affable Young appears to have stepped up his production game once again. Not only has he lent his skills to new and forthcoming releases from Mos Def, De La Soul, Jill Scott and Welsh folksinger Jem, he's hard at work putting the finishing touches on a solo full-length earmarked for an early 2005 release. Although he remains maddeningly tightlipped on the project's specific details, Young promises it will be a genre-spanning album that's



well worth the wait. "I can't give it away yet," he says. "Some of the guests are artists I've worked with before, but I've also got some real surprises for people. The biggest aim is to show my versatility."

Until then, Ge-Ology's got all sorts of other brainwaves in the test stages, includ-

ing plans for an international solo art show that he's hoping to launch in conjunction with the record. "I'm going through a really beautiful transition right now," he smiles. "There are all these new opportunities suddenly coming through."



compilation #2

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Big time radio, a respected reggae label and dancehall dominance are all the domain of Massive B.

Words: Jesse Serwer
Photo: Jessica Miller



Bobby Konders has been running this dancehall thing in New York for a minute.

"I've been doing this three years now," jokes the don behind the Massive B sound system and record label during a commercial break from *On Da Reggae Tip*, the Sunday night radio mix he and Massive B emcee Jabba have been holding down for New York City's Hot 97 since 1993. While Konders' sarcastic quip is appropriate, given his role in pioneering the in-joke heavy banter that now typifies urban radio mix shows, it couldn't be further from the truth. Bobby Konders' roots as a dancehall DJ and producer actually date back to the 1980s, a decade when he was better known for deep house productions like "The Poem."

"As a kid in the '70s, I heard reggae on alternative radio shows," Konders recalls wistfully from the surprisingly disheveled lobby Hot 97 shares with New York City's KISS-FM and CD 101.9. "You know when stuff just catches you? It held me. When I started DJing, the people I was around wasn't too much into it, so I was playing American music, early hip-hop, dance, and funk but I went to reggae dances myself. When I got big in Manhattan

in the late '80s doing some house stuff, I was that Yankee kid who played reggae and dancehall with the house."

As house became a mainstream phenomenon at the outset of the 1990s, Konders promptly lost interest. He turned his attention to the music that originally caught his attention as a teen moving back and forth between his hometown of Easton, PA, and various family outposts in New York City—and which typified the vibe in his adopted home of Central Brooklyn.

Holding onto his house pseudonym Massive Sounds, he assembled a handful of major label ragga hip-hop singles (Mikey Jarrett's "Mack Daddy," Supercat's "Ghetto Red Hot") at D&D Studio with future Fugees sound architect Salaam Remi. At the same time, Konders began breaking dancehall onto New York radio while doing lunch mixes for Inner City Broadcasting's WBLS. Shortly thereafter, he founded Massive B as an outlet for the bashment remakes of classic rub-a-dub riddims he was making with the likes of Half Pint and Burro Banton.

More than 10 years later, Cutty Ranks, Ninja Man, Johnny Osbourne and T.O.K. have all released 45s and 12"s on Massive B. With connections in yard that run deeper than any other American DJ, Sizzla, Elephant Man, TOK and Bounty Killer all regularly chat Bobby Konders riddims, with Vybz Kartel joining the fray to voice his latest, "Rah Rah." He's had his hand in the production of classic dancehall albums like Bounty Killer's 1996 breakthrough *My Xperience*, and recently inaugurated Greensleeves' new legal mixtape series with his *Mad Sick Head Nah Good*.

But what separates Bobby from other dancehall DJs and producers is his appearance. White, nearing middle age, with long, just-past shoulder length red hair, he is the antithesis of dancehall's young, black and shiny image. Talking around a number of questions pertaining to his status as dancehall's lone visible white figure, Bobby eventually offers: "I always stuck out. I was always that white motherfucker on the playground who played basketball."

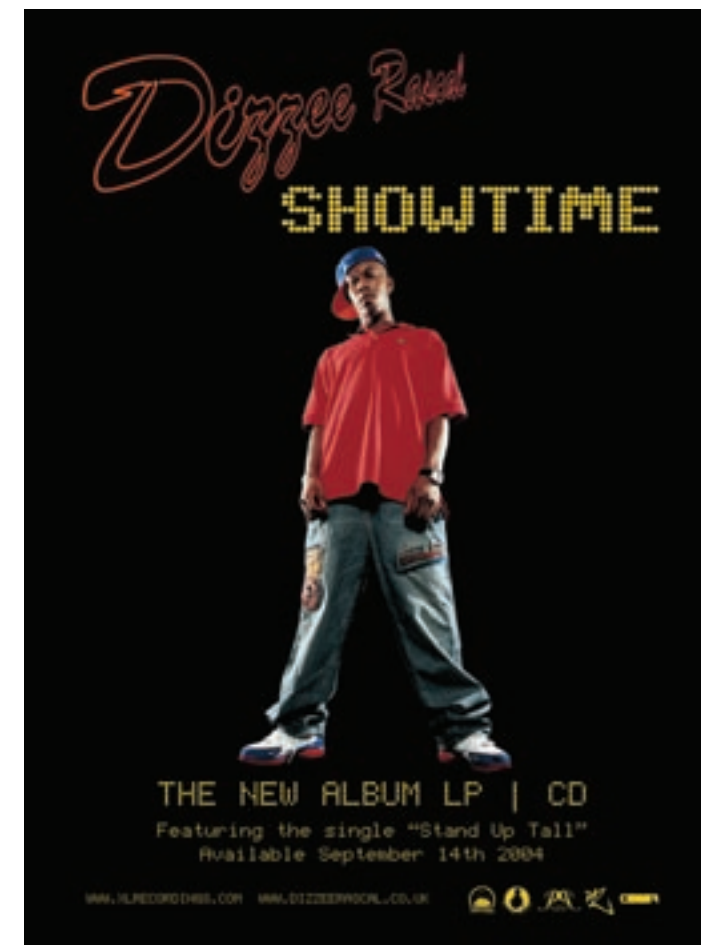
His whiteness is a fact that, due to his heavily patois-inflected speech, is often lost on listeners.

"Still to this day, if they don't come to West Indian parties, they might not know," he acknowledges. But whether it's holding down dances with Jabba and the rest of the Massive B sound system at spots like Caribbean City in Crown Heights or Q Club in Queens, or supplying mixtape booths in Flatbush, Brooklyn, or Jamaica, Queens, Konders' work is evident wherever the presence of West Indian culture is felt in New York.

Konders' influence is at its apex inside Hot 97's sound studio at 395 Hudson Street, on the southwestern fringe of Greenwich Village. It's there that he and co-host Jabba play a pivotal role as tastemakers for what amounts to the whole dancehall-listening world outside the West Indies. As the main reggae selectors on the country's most widely heard and influential urban radio station, Konders has the capability to break tracks into Hot 97's daily playlist, a major path to US stardom for dancehall artists. Arguably it was spins from Bobby and Jabba that helped guide the likes of Sean Paul, Elephant Man and TOK from yard and ghetto celebs to American pop stars.

"Bobby Konders never got comfortable," Jabba explains of his colleague's longevity between *On Da Reggae Tip* roll calls. "If you want to book Massive B you aren't going to talk to a secretary, you are going to talk to me or Bobby. He's always calling Jamaica, looking in his mail for the new joints, out in the streets. If the streets aren't with you, you're finished and the streets are with Bobby Konders and Jabba, and we are with the streets."

The official Bobby Konders mixtape, *Mad Sick, Head Nah Good*, is out now on Greensleeves. www.greensleeves.net. Check out Massive B's catalog of amazing releases at www.massiveb.com.



Sun Ra channeled into disco-punk noise, get ready to dance ecstatic.

Words: Alexis Georgopoulos
Image: Brian DeGraw



Contrary to what their name may suggest, Gang Gang Dance does not live or die in the name of the dancefloor. Their music is just too unhinged. Too unpredictable. Too free. Then again, that may depend on what your conception of what dancing is. If it involves the occasional voodoo seizure or perhaps some erratic freeform poplocking, the NYC-based quartet may just be your ideal dancefloor guide. "I always describe our music to people who haven't heard it as 'dance' music," explains Brian DeGraw. "Then they come see us perform and come to the conclusion that I must have several screws loose. But to us, it really is dance music."

Indeed, a good listen to their Social Registry debut, *Revival of the Shittest*, or their more recent self-titled album on Fusetron does inspire a good rethink of one's expectations of what...anything is. Comprised of DeGraw, a painter and illustrator, curator and Terry Richardson muse Lizzi Bougatos, ex-Jackie-O-Motherfucker member Josh

Diamond and sometime White Magic member Tim Dewitt, the group, like their contemporaries Black Dice, Animal Collective and No Neck Blues Band (with whom they share an ethos of improvisation more than a specific sound), rejects hierarchical ways of composing. Melody and rhythm each get equal emphasis, often shifting under each other like restless plate tectonics, ready to detonate or evaporate at any given moment.

While other free/noise groups may scare away listeners with a lack of recurrent patterns, motifs pop up throughout their two long-players. Melodies recur, reinterpreted, like thoughts that arise and recede, only to surface again. The resulting quasi-narrative effect, combined with the fierce rhythmic currents the group creates, can reach near shamanistic proportions. And while evocative of the vibrant, dangerous chaos of New York, their music also recalls ancient Egyptian or perhaps Greek music, from times when music took

on more mystical forms.

"I think after exhausting ourselves on Western music, just running out of interesting things to listen to, we all turned towards other countries to hear something different," DeGraw continues. "Tim especially has always had his ear to the East. And Lizzi is Greek, so that has got to be in there somewhere. (And) as far as the dubby element, I think at this point that stuff is probably in our blood." In the end, DeGraw says, the guiding light is themselves.

"I don't know if we ever really 'go for' anything. We really just play and play until something happens where we all look at each other and smile. I suppose we're really just trying our best to make something very new sounding—as boring and clichéd as that may seem, it's the truth nonetheless. We have all gone through the wringers of so many musical genres that all we have left to interest us is the music we make ourselves."

www.thesocialregistry.com

DJ Seoul and crew keep the heart of NYC drum & bass beating.

Words: Daniel Siwek Photo: Matthew Salacuse

If terrorists seemed bent on ruining life in New York City, our last two mayors have been equally determined to kill the Big Apple's nightlife. Once the clubbing capitol of the world, dancing the town red has not only become increasingly hard to do, in some cases it's become downright illegal.

So remembers Cliff Cho (a.k.a. DJ Seoul), a former Konkrete Jungle resident who ventured out on his own to start up Direct Drive in September of 1998. "I had to battle that Cabaret Law," he says. "And I remember for about six months we had to ask people not to dance until about 2 a.m.. But we wouldn't turn down the music—instead we had fun punishing them by making it louder." That the night could be successful without dancing proved that die-hard drum & bass fans' genuine interest in the music was unwavering.

Inspired by raves like NYC's legendary NASA parties, Cho wanted to take jungle's Stateside profile to a different level, and he wanted NYC to respect drum & bass enough to come out on a weekend. "I wanted to have a d&b party on a Friday or a Saturday, because I believe this music should be on the main floor in any club in any city," he explains. "And when people found out that I was going for a 21-and-over niche, they just told me I was crazy." Cho has proved them wrong, drawing a good crowd nearly every weekend. Of course bassheads turn out for big-name guests like Randall, Zinc, J Majik and Nookie, but big numbers also turn up to support NYC staples, including regular guests like Reid Speed, The Burner Brothers and Datcyde.

Contrary to logical assumption, Cliff Cho did not get the name "Direct Drive" from the turntable function, but rather from a draining commute that used to clash with his commitment to rock. In the early days of the party, he used to drive in from Jersey for work, go to the club, and drive home just to start over again. "I was going back and forth all the time, so it made sense that I called it 'Direct Drive,'" he explains. "It's straight to the point."

Direct Drive, which celebrated its sixth anniversary in September,



continues to throw one-offs at places like Avalon (formerly Limelight), as well as promoting a charity event called InStrumental in Brooklyn's Red Hook neighborhood; the October 28th installment will feature Brazil's DJ Marky with MC Stamina. The events are sure to be packed with a diverse throng, rang-

ing from graphic designers to fashion folk to the d&b diehards. But no matter how trendy his club gets, Cho assures us that "jungle nerds will always be welcome."

Direct Drive is on Saturdays at Rare (formerly The Cooler), 416 W. 14th St., between 9th and 10th Avenues. www.directdrive.net

TIM SWEENEY

Launched by mentors like Steinski and Coldcut, Tim Sweeney's DJing is orbiting in outer space.



Tim Sweeney has his finger pressed to the synthetic pulse of Gotham City as a music supervisor for Rockstar Games and, more importantly, as the proprietor of the Beats in Space radio show at New York University, where he studied Music Technology. After a couple of shuffles, the show settled into its current time slot on WNYU (89.1 FM, suckers!) on Thursday nights from 10:30 p.m.-1 a.m. But even when he began BiS in 1999, Sweeney wasn't a newbie to the game, having already logged hours as a DJ in high school. Plus, he had the right kind of role models.

Words: Scott Thill
Photo: Kareem Black

"Coldcut's Solid Steel show has always been a big influence," Sweeney explains, "I wanted a show like Solid Steel where you could play anything, mix it together and still have it sound cohesive. Even though the tracks might be different from start to finish, there's still a flow to it all."

But the legendary Coldcut wasn't the only influence on this Space traveler; his own family also helped pave his way to the decks. "I started when I was about 14 because my older brother was messing around with [DJing]. I would practice after school and make mixtapes that I sent to people on email lists, which eventually led to my first gigs in Baltimore."

The Big Apple scene is far more competitive than Sweeney's hometown, but he feels there's a balance to NYC that's often overlooked. "There are a lot of DJs in New York, but there are also a lot of places to DJ as well," he explains. "So I don't feel like DJs are backstabbing each other for gigs, which is nice. It's actually cool having so many around, because you can learn about the different kinds of music and techniques others use. I just wish more people would dance in New York."

For his part, Sweeney's happy that new- and old-schoolers, like the legendary Steinski, are around to help expose the hidden corners of the trade to potential DJs.

"Steinski really opened up my ears to a lot of music. When I first moved to New York, he was one of the first people I sought out to guest DJ my radio show. I learned so much from him about music, art, books, people and more. I can't say enough good things about him. A few years later, I met Tim Goldsworthy and James Murphy [of the DFA], who explained how things worked in the studio, what music influenced them, how a record label starts out (and very quickly blows up). All of these were experiences that made me truly love living and working in New York."

www.beatsinspace.net



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DOWNTOWN AVANT GARDE

Improv, free jazz and experimental music call Lower Manhattan home.

Words: J. David Marston
Photo: David Naugle



▲ A night at Tonic

Few New York expressions are so tepid, yet so thoroughly loaded, as the Manhattan parlance of “uptown” and “downtown.” It’s the language of geography, but the polis of cultural identification. Uptown invokes money, convention, power, conservative values and the status quo, while downtown is synonymous with the avant-garde, bohemian lifestyles, and unconventional music and the new. Neither of these definitions has changed much since Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney, an uptown girl, decided to embrace the artists of “downtown,” and later founded the Whitney Museum of American Art.

Musically, what does it mean to be downtown? The short list: La Monte Young, Arto Lindsay, Mark Dresser, Elliot Sharp, Television, Loren Mazzacane Connors, Z’EV, Laurie Anderson, Phil Niblock, Marc Ribot, DJ Olive, Susie Ibarra, Thurston Moore, Bill Laswell, John Medeski, Patti Smith, Christian Marclay, Alan Licht, John Zorn. Free jazz, improv, punk, No Wave, minimalism and the unconventional have all emanated from south of 14th Street—free of Manhattan’s grid. The current blend of artists working and performing, both literally and conceptually in downtown, is all over the audible spectrum.

Although not geographically downtown, The Diapason Gallery on 6th Ave. at 39th St. hosts some fantastically lowercase sound artists, and is nearly the only gallery in New York expressly dedicated to sound art. Recently, the Sculpture Center in Long Island City, Queens, hosted a

sound series including a stunning William Basinski performance. Engine 81 in Lower Manhattan is home to Experimental Intermedia (est. 1968), founded by downtown stalwart Phil Niblock, and it hosts its share of interesting electronic performances. Harvest Works in SoHo has been a center for electronic arts education and host to music and video shows since 1977.

For much of the 1980s and early 1990s, the Knitting Factory was nearly the only place to hear unusual music, but it eventually folded to uptown pressures, as Peter Gannushkin of downtown-music.net describes. “To solve the financial problem, [Knitting Factory owner Michael] Dorf started to get rock-oriented musicians to the club, but it didn’t work well enough to keep it on the top. Soon after that, he left the KF himself. It’s a very different place now.”

In 2004, the epicenter for improv, electronic, unconventional and jazz is definitely the Lower East Side and the venue Tonic (at Norfolk and Delancey). Founded by John Zorn in 1998, it has served as the *de facto* sight of some of the most engaging shows over the past six years. With a rotating curatorial system, Tonic consistently tops other venues in depth, breadth and scope of musical expression. Another LES stalwart, the Living Room, recently moved to bigger digs on Ludlow, and is a consistent venue for engaging jazz and acoustic performances. With downtown’s ever-replenished ranks of experimental seekers, New York’s unusual music scene is showing no signs of slowing down.

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Elliot Taub makes intricate and epic techno that James Joyce readers can appreciate.

words: Peter Nicholson
Photo: Dan Pak www.dpak.com



Elliot Taub (a.k.a. Ulysses) is your typical electronic producer: day job as a web designer, Master's degree in architecture, former race walker on the US Track & Field team. Well, one out of three ain't bad. All biographical oddities aside, Taub is at once a talented producer unwilling to chain himself to one micro-genre, head of the budding Scatalogics label, and an accomplished promoter bringing something extra to New York nightlife.

As Ulysses, Taub has recorded for labels like Guidance, Laser Gun and Plastic City Suburbia, and remixed artists as disparate as Arthur Baker and Romatt, developing a sound that can be succinctly described as *electro-tech-Italo-disco*. Or something to that effect. Rather than relying on his rigorous formal training (comprised of a bit of flute playing in elementary school and guitar lessons on how to play "Wish You Were Here" from his brother), Taub is forging his own style that embraces the sexy sheen

of electro and the gritty groove of techno.

He's also not too demure to mention influences, nor acknowledge the upside of incompetence. "The good thing is, I'm not a very good mimic," Taub confesses over the blast of car horns beneath his apartment window. "So I'd say, 'Okay, I really like Miss Kittin and the Hacker, so I'm gonna try and make a Hacker song.' When I'd sit down to do it, [the music] wouldn't sound anything like him. So I'd go, 'Man, I'm gonna try again! Maybe if I use this drum sound it'll get there.' And then, of course, it doesn't, but I was happy with the results anyway." Those results range from moody, gently meandering electro on "No One Is My Baby" from the Aviator Sunglasses EP (Lasergun) to the gorgeously tactile bass and crisp piano of "Dirty House" from the eponymous EP forthcoming on Scatalogics.

In addition to Taub's recordings, Scatalogics has already dropped records from Hakan Lidbo and will soon release a

deliciously twisted record from Alexander Robotnick, famous for 1983's "Problèmes d'Amour." This past summer, Robotnick played the eighth installment of another Taub project, the Regressive Technologies series. As one of the first large electro events, Regressive Technologies helped foster the infamy of electroclash. But in addition to names commonly associated with that scene (like DJ Unknown of Fischerspooner), the party has also hosted Arthur Baker and John Selway, with whom Taub forms the Neurotic Drum Band.

NDB was formed out of a mutual love for Italo disco but, true to form, has deviated from its initial path. "We decided we wanted to do something that was fun dance music that was reminiscent of Italo stuff," explains Taub. "But, of course, nothing ever comes out the way you intend it to, and it sounds nothing like Italo disco but ends up being a lot of fun."

www.scatalogics.com

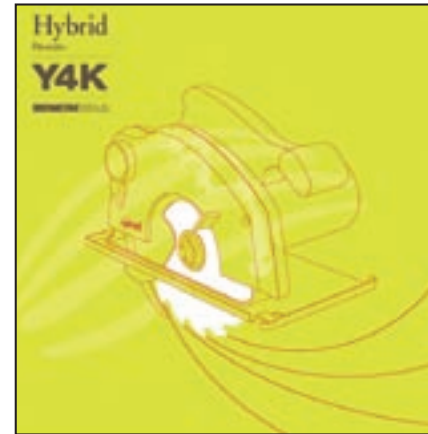
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VINYL AVAILABLE AT ALL VIRGIN LOCATIONS

This push-me-pull-you duo brings disco sex to the dancefloor.

Words: James Friedman



Eric Duncan and Thomas Bullock are not your run-of-the-mill NYC disco heads. They weren't Garage regulars like Krivit and Kevorkian, nor do they seem to evince a real affection for the gospel disco overtones of so much of New York's dance music heritage.

Instead, their infamous rUb n tUg nights keep to the druggy, debauched side of funk, featuring a twisted soundtrack of obscure and fucked up rarities, bizarre Italo-disco covers of Led Zeppelin and a heavy dose of effects. Rather than creating a space for the music like David Mancuso did at The Loft, rUb n tUg is a reflection of its home at Passerby, a cramped bar inside Gavin Brown's Enterprise gallery on the far West Side of Manhattan.

Bullock explains the pair's meeting thusly: "We were always the first ones in line at opening time and the last ones standing when it came time to close. One day, [Eric and I] got talking and, as I suspected, there was more in common than drinking habits." Indeed, Duncan and Bullock share an affinity for playing deafeningly loud disco for freaky people that drink too much, stay up too late, and sometimes take their clothes off in public. Their night rarely gets good before 2 a.m. and it almost never ends

at 4 a.m.. Instead, Passerby's security gate goes down and the tiny West Side bar becomes the city's best loved afterhours lock-in.

rUb n tUg isn't a secret, but Duncan and Bullock have made virtually no effort to promote their night or publicize it whatsoever. Virtually unknown within the dance music establishment in New York, Duncan and Bullock's brand of bearded disco has taken them to major European clubs like Cookies in Berlin and the Culture Club in Ghent, as well as earning them a slew of remix offers and glowing press in tastemaking magazines like *i-D*.

The irony, of course, is that this is what they've been doing for ages. Their mind-blowing mix, *Rui Crui's Place*, is a several-year-old live set that only recently saw release via underground streetwear label aNYthing. Bullock was part of the legendary Tonka Hi-Fi, San Francisco's Wicked Crew, and was an early collaborator with A.R.E. Weapons, and Duncan has worked at A-I Records for ages and released a number of re-edits on DJ Spun's Rong Music.

Yet they didn't become collaborators over their love of rare records or a shared mission to save the disco from obscurity and nostalgia. rUb n tUg is basically a party they throw for themselves and the other Passerby regulars. The fact that lots of other people come week after week and boogie until the sun rises is just proof that their charm is rubbing off.

rUb n tUg's *Rui Crui's Place* is out now. !!!'s "Hello? Is This Thing On? (rUb n tUg Throwdown)" is out now on Warp.

Alt rap innovator makes the hip-hop of tomorrow with one eye on the past.

Words: Eric K. Arnold
Photo: Jessica Miller



New York has and always will be an exciting place," says Beans. "There's no other place in the world like it. I draw a lot of inspiration from being a New Yorker. It definitely makes up who I am and how I hear music."

The Gotham MC, formerly a member of cultural rebels Anti-Pop Consortium, is often lumped into the alternative rap bag, which can be both a curse and a blessing. His sophomore solo album, *Shock City Maverick*, does nothing to dispel that perception—songs like "Death By Sophistication" and "Papercut" are worlds away from the thuggy street anthems and blinged-out club tracks currently cluttering commercial radio playlists.

Beans explains that his music represents a historical progression, if not nostalgia (his "down by law" Le Tigre-meets-LL Cool J pose on the album's cover notwithstanding). He speaks of not only paying tribute to tradition, but creating his own mythology, as EPMD did by sampling themselves. "What I'm trying to do is reference my own self, so I can show that what I'm doing is in somewhat of a continuum," he explains. "Everything is a conscious decision, it's not random abstraction."

When you purchase an album, he says, "you're not only buying the music, but you're buying a piece of that person. If you are an artist, the more wounds you expose, the more vulnerability you have, people gravitate toward that."

It's interesting—and fairly atypical—to hear a rap artist speak on such topics; most tend to hide behind the mask of hyper-masculinity. But then Beans has little interest in furthering stereotypes. *Shock City Maverick's* dissonant minimalism relates more to the highly creative hip-hop symbolized by '80s icons Jean-Michel Basquiat and K-Rob and Rammellzee than to the predictability of contemporary NYC dons Fat Joe and Juelz Santana. Yet Beans' openness doesn't prevent him from laying down blistering battle-raps on "I'll Melt You," and, this time around, he says, his beats are more "immediate" and "groove-orientated."

His lyrics also work on many levels. The instrumental soundscape "You're Dead, Let's Disco" could be a commentary on dead rappers and commercialism, but Beans reveals that the title derives from an episode of *Sex in the City*. And while "Shards of Glass" could be a reference to his rocky relationship with the mother of his daughter (yes, even alt rappers have baby mama drama), the name actually came from the name of the house band in the movie *Jump Tomorrow*.

As the "Ornette Coleman of this rap shit," it would be easy for a free-thinker like Beans to wallow in pessimism. But he's decided not to go that route. "I think hip-hop is still so young," he says. "There's so many rules to be broken, and so many things to be said—that's what makes it really exciting for me."

Shock City Maverick is out now on Warp. www.warp.com

One of the globe's premiere design collectives thrives on New York's seething intensity.

Words: Matthew Newton Image: Surface To Air



In a city where sensory overload is king, the competition can be fierce. So for homegrown art collective Surface To Air, crafting eye-popping, avant-garde designs has become normal operating procedure.

"What you give to NYC it gives back; as such, it's an incredibly inspirational place," says Rolondo Gobbins, one-fourth of the collective's NYC family. "Its advantage is in the people, the 'I don't give a fuck' attitude. It's also a fickle town. If you don't keep on top of your shit, you are gonna get your ass kicked by the next kid trying to claw his way to the top."

But for the nine-member Surface To Air clique, staying ahead of the curve has never proven difficult. Producing limited edition books like *Pour la Victoire*, its own line of silk-screened t-shirts, handbags and prints, and accessories like designer brass knuckles and bayonet charm necklaces, next-level thought comes naturally. In addition to nurturing its own product line, the group is widely

commissioned for editorial work, regularly exhibits in galleries and also handles art direction for Canadian rockers The Stills.

And even with half of the collective working out of SoHo and the other half toiling away at its famed Paris boutique (not to mention a solo member in Barcelona), Surface To Air is still a uniquely New York creation. "[We] began about six years ago in a dirty and dingy loft off Union Square," recalls Gobbins. "The impetus came from the energy and spirit that New York embodies—the idea that everything can and *does* happen [here]."

The spirit that Gobbins refers to is translated and conveyed in each Surface To Air endeavor—from detailed, collage-like illustrations to its "Blood Money" t-shirts

and futuristic lounge chair designs. And when citing the method behind Surface To Air's creative madness, Gobbins repeatedly refers to NYC's intensity and spirit as a prototypic model.

With new projects abounding, this multi-purpose art collective continues to raise the stakes. "We just finished making a giant crop circle of Hello Kitty's head for an exhibition in Japan—it's half a football field in size," Gobbins proudly explains. "We also just completed our third book, *Flip the Script*, which is a movie poster book. It is the second largest book ever printed, as it is actual movie poster size. In addition to the boutique and all of our regular projects, you could say we are busy as fuck."

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SOUND-INK, BROOKLYN BEATS AND THE AGRICULTURE

A trio of eclectic Brooklyn labels creates a home for bastard soul, roof music and broken-down beats.



▲ Sound-Ink's Alex Threadgold (left) and Nat Gossman

Bastard Soul, the title of an upcoming Sound-Ink Records compilation, goes a long way towards capturing the output of the three-year-old Brooklyn label. "We're interested in different styles rubbing up against each other and sometimes making life happen, albeit illegitimately," says Alex Threadgold, who (along with Heat Sensor's Nat Gossman) runs Sound-Ink out of his Cobble Hill apartment. "Sound-Ink is about the babies soul-derived music would rather leave unclaimed, for giving their orthodox parents the middle finger."

Founded in 2001, the label is quickly becoming one of the county's top sources for left-field hip-hop. Best known for assembling and conceptualizing Viktor Vaughn's *Vaudeville Villain* album with a still-on-the-rise MF Doom, the label has since released a bumper crop of producer-driven 12"s from Heat Sensor, fellow Viktor Vaughn beat contributor King Honey, South Africa's Markus Wormstrom, Egyptian breakbeat scientist DJ Mutamassik, and separate releases from Antipop Consortium/Airborn Audio members M Sayyid and High Priest.

"Almost everything we've released, I've had my hands in, in one way or another," says Gossman, who handles the technical side of the label out of his Fort Greene home/studio. "When we recorded Viktor Vaughn, Doom was sleeping on my floor with his 10-year-old kid."

But Sound-Ink isn't the only label filling the ADD-beats-meet-high-concept hip-hop void left open by the disappearance of Skiz Fernando's Wordsound Records. Next to the J-M-Z tracks in a still un-gentrified stretch of South Williamsburg is the headquarters of Brooklyn Beats, the head-music emporium run by transplanted Midwesterners Criterion "Crito" Thornton and Heather Leitner (who batter beats together as Criterion & Doily). Perhaps the most expressly political label to work in the still largely apolitical field of electronic music, the label was birthed with a handful of CDRs at the start of the CD burning age in 1999. Notable releases included Criterion's deconstruction of down-home truckin' songs, *Brooklyn Truckers*

Words: Jesse Serwer
Photo: Jessica Miller

Union 003, and the *Brutal Police Menace* compilation, a reaction to Giuliani-era police brutality and a benefit for LES anarchist headquarters ABC No Rio.

While the political edge has been toned way down, it still colors the label, periodically rising to the surface. Godspeed You Black Emperor! drummer Aidan Girt, recording as 1-Speed Bike (a.k.a. Bottleskup Flenkenmike), recently dropped absurdist Mark Stewart-style political observations on "There's An Oil Tanker Named Condoleezza Rice" from his recent "El Gallito" EP. They've also dropped early 7"s from the likes of DJ/Rupture and Donna Summer/Jason Forrest as part of their (sic) series—which references the odd spelling of their name. "People always misspell our name," Crito complains. "It's pretty simple, though: the music is broken beats and we're in Brooklyn."

In far northern Greenpoint, Williamsburg scene pioneer DJ Olive (Gregor Asch) runs his five-year-old label The Agriculture with the help of Bryan Kasenic (a.k.a. DJ Spinoza), a roommate of Criterion and Doily's and the man behind The Bunker party at Subtonic in the Lower East Side. Olive, apparently, is also suffering from public perception issues.

Olive, who birthed the term illibent while inadvertently developing the sound in the mid-'90s as one-third of We, has since moved in new directions. To that effect, Asch has coined a new term to describe the multi-faceted urban soundclash typified by *Bodega*, his first solo album as DJ Olive: roof music.

"When you have a loft party in a place like Brooklyn you have house music, downtempo, and dancehall coexisting in the same place—just all this information passing by up on the roof, where you have a barbecue, and Latin sounds coming from the street," Olive says. "We try to make urban dance music that has that earthy kind of feel—vinyl that really has a shelf life" www.theagriculture.com, www.brooklynbeats.net, www.sound-ink.com

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Mars

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Beacon's Closet

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Ted Barrow : Switch Back Tail :: Rob Erickson : Photo

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The Hole 29 2nd Ave., 212.777.9660 The only thing nastier than the decor is the rough trade, past its prime and all that much better for it.

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Oznot's Dish



Punjab



Breakbeat Science

Graffiti Hall of Fame 106th St. and Park Ave. The name says it all.

The Picasso off Houston Street Near Houston St. and LaGuardia Place Stuck in the midst of high-rise housing is a massive Picasso sculpture.

Terminal 5 One of New York's greatest works of architecture is temporarily a massive art installation complete with lecture series. www.terminalfive.com

The Wall Street Canyons The first skyscrapers were built down by Wall St. and they didn't quite know how to do it right. The result is a surreal and dark urban canyonlands best explored when empty on the weekends.

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Casa Latina en el Barrio 151 E. 116th St., 212.427.6062 Spanish Harlem's musical landmark.

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Dub Spot 437 East 12th St., 212.677.1505 A touch of Japanese flavor keeps this East Village vinyl emporium fresh.

Earwax 204 Bedford Ave., Brooklyn, 718.486.3771 Keeping it good taste indie on Williamsburg's main drag.

Fat Beats 406 6th Ave., 212.673.3883 Heaven for the hip-hop purist. www.fatbeats.com

Fulton Mall Fulton St. off Flatbush Ave., Brooklyn Wander around for a few minutes until you find a mixtape vendor; they'll have the hottest dancehall and hip hop mixes at about \$5 a pop.

Heartbeat 107 W 10th St., 212.255.5260 The front carries a housey selection, but the true gems are in the don't-miss basement bins.

Jammyland 60 East 3rd St., 212.614.0185 Meeting all your Jamaican musical needs. www.jammyland.com

Manhattan Latin Music Center 471 W. 42nd St., 212.563.4508 We think you can figure this one out.

Mondo Kim's 6 St Marks Place, 212.598.9985 The main location of New York's indie superstore. www.kimsvideo.com

Other Music 15 E 4th St., 212.477.8150 The selection is spectacular; as is the arrogance of the staff. www.othermusic.com

Satellite 259 Bowery, 212.995.1744 An electronic music powerhouse on the Bowery. www.satelliterecords.com

The Thing Manhattan Ave. at Green St., Brooklyn Head to the basement where they put the dig 'into diggin' in the crates. For the hardcore beat junkies only.

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Pod Wierchami 119 Nassau Ave., Brooklyn, 718.383.0670 Any number of Polish restaurants in Greenpoint will serve you a three course meal for less than the price of an average New York appetizer, but the Pod is a notch above the rest.

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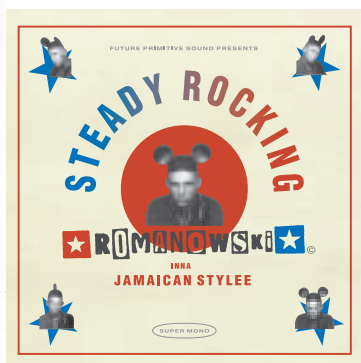
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▲ Liam Howlett

Back when credible electronic artists were infiltrating the mainstream, none pierced deeper than Liam Howlett's Prodigy—a four-man crew initially assembled to breathe life and a live show into Howlett's studio productions. Prodigy tracks like "Your Love" and "Charly" defined the early rave years, and continued to rock harder than any others in the post-grunge era. Now, like acid house and shoegaze rock before it, Prodigy-brand funk has been resurrected from the last decade, and Howlett seems to have waited just long enough between albums to capitalize on 1990s nostalgia.

Appropriately enough, the first sound we hear on *Always Outnumbered, Never Outgunned* is a power chord, compressed and amplified to make your chest implode. If Howlett seems to have ignored the technical advancements of the laptop generation, he has cribbed a few notes from Timbaland's playbook, herein conjuring the sort of mighty sounds that will induce convulsions in the meek and unprepared.

In compositional terms, the Englishman has practically nothing new to offer here, *Always Outnumbered...*'s songs succeed only insofar as they commingle elements from disparate eras. Lead single "Girls," for example, places a jackboot straight up the ass of electro fashionistas—its bassline is a techstep grenade, its breaks Mantronix-approved, and its vocal refrain an indelible raved-up mantra. In short, the song is tailor-made for MTV...circa '97.

Such is the retro sensibility coursing throughout *Always Outnumbered*, an album that manages to be both baldly regressive and incendiary all at once. Have we earned such guilty pleasures? Yes, especially when such pleasures entail "The Way It Is," a recasting of Michael Jackson's "Thriller" as a flash-frozen b-boy anthem.

Indeed, much as it might be tempting to dismiss many of these songs as outmoded, it's practically impossible to not be literally moved by them.

The guest vocalists collected here—including Kool Keith and actress Juliette Lewis—march in rigid lockstep to Howlett's darkside beats, each one sounding angrier than the last. Even the usually impish Twista gets all incensed on "Get Up Get Off," his clipped and hateful delivery ideally suited to the backing track's bashmental vibe. For his part, Oasis' Liam Gallagher sneers in the all right places during "Shoot Down," a song that skillfully updates the cock-rock template for the 21st century. Notably absent are the group's former MCs—afro-cyborg Maxim Reality and John Lydon—referencing former back-up dancer Keith (of "Smack My Bitch Up" fame)—but as the Prodigy was always Howlett's baby, he's none the worse for wear without them.

Rendered in the producer's distinctive blood-and-sweat-splattered style, this is an overwhelmingly masculine record, its occasional flirtation with self-parody an inevitable by-product of Howlett's swaggering style. True, there is nothing inherently shocking about these songs, but their purely visceral appeal reminds us that, like the hippies we once ridiculed, ravers are not immune to nostalgia. Don't look now, Howlett seems to be saying, but the past is gaining on us. *Martin Turznee*

**ALBUM
REVIEWS
10.04**

**PRODIGY
ALWAYS OUTNUMBERED,
NEVER OUTGUNNED**
XL/US/CD





BEANS

BEANS SHOCK CITY MAVERICK
Warp/UK/CD

Tomorrow was right now yesterday, so this time around Beans gets relativistic and checks out the fourth dimension. The former Anti-Popist packs his rocket full of vintage drum machines and thrashing, insistent basslines, loads up bags full of shredded lyric notebooks for fuel, and sets course for Planet Rock. Though Beans tweaks the knobs hard on the occasional mind-bending instrumental, for the most part *Shock City Maverick* sticks to a harder, leaner sound, with the spaces between the clicks and clacks filled by verse. While his rhyme schemes and references stay as complex as ever, Beans has learned that skeletal, uptempo bodyrockers fit his style best, and tracks like "I'll Melt You" burn like lasers. Mark Pritchard beams in to lend a futuristic battle-hymn stomp to "Diamond Halo Grenade," but this is Beans' universe now—we just live in it. *Rob Cery*

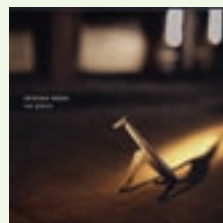


AFRIKA BAMBAATA DARK MATTER MOVING AT THE SPEED OF LIGHT
Tommy Boy/US/CD

Over 30 years after Bam ditched the Black Spades gang and formed Zulu Nation (helping create hip-hop in the process), he's back and showing the neo-electros how it's done. You'll have a hard time finding a better party album in 2004, especially one with Gary Numan on it. "Got That Vibe" cranks forward with a butter-smooth rap from King Kemonzi, while Numan's turn on "Metal" tosses you in a time machine and glues the door shut. The space funk of "2137" sounds like The Gap Band jumped R2D2 and started sequencing his innards. Careening confidently between Bollywood, salsa, African polyrhythms, jazz and Bam's patented planet rock, *Dark Matter* should be mandatory listening for crunk suckers everywhere. *Scott Thill*

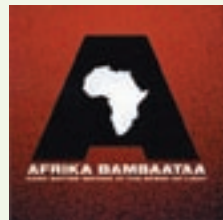
AFRODIZZ KIF KIF Do Right!
CAN/CD

It's a sign of this Canadian Afrobeat-funk band's talent that even songs clocking in at over 10 minutes don't drag. But then, with warm vocals, outstanding jazz percussion, tight brass and subtle bass and guitar, it's easier to want more than less from this debut. Inspired by Nigerian godfather Fela Kuti, the Montreal-based group combines consciousness with musicality, as on "Faces," when Vance Payne sings about the importance of, well, doing right shortly before a stand-out guitar solo. Even the song called "Propaganda" doesn't sacrifice musicianship for polemic—something plenty of conscious artists haven't been able to duplicate. *Luciana Lopez*



BELL SEVEN TYPES OF SIX
Soul Jazz/UK/CD

Slog through the first track on this album to get to the dark, spare core of electro-funk at the heart of Bell's second album. Produced to hell, then produced a bit more, the combination of fat bass, driving techno beats, twisted occasional vocals and breaks is the soundtrack to a robot orgy, complete with heavy breathing (as on "Mode 3," which features the synthesizer-heavy sound that marks most of the album). Other standouts include the '80s arcade-esque "Daylight Burn" and "Black Helicopters," with its Ewok-on-acid vocals. *Luciana Lopez*



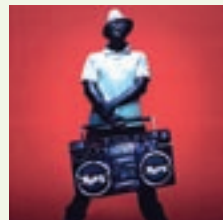
CIRCUS VS. ANDRE AFRAM ASMAR GAWD BLESS THE FACELESS COWARDS
Mush/US/CD
AWOL ONE
Paladin/US/CD

Abstract emcees Circus and Awol One from LA's Shapeshifters supercrew just released their solo projects, and the results are as different as they are. Awol One enlists a crew of indie producer heavyweights (Evidence, Kutmaster Kurt, Omid) to provide him with serious boom bap, while Circus cozies up with avant-electronic producer Andre Afram Asmar to create a soundtrack that mirrors his ridiculous raps. Neither rapper actually rhymes, but Circus' sing-song lyrics flow over Andre's clanging beats and Awol's monotone delivery successfully contrasts with his backing beats. Awol speaks from the heart, while Circus speaks from space, but aliens, Jesus, sex and government conspiracies are common themes. Shapeshifter fans and the truly open-minded will enjoy these. *DJ Anna*



CLIENT CITY
Toast Hawaii/UK/CD

Since the electro(clash) boom, subsequent offerings have often sounded like feeble attempts to jump on an already-sinking ship. This release from British duo Client is electro—and often pop—but damned if it's not honest, heartfelt and really rather good. This is the kind of fun, confident dance music that would fit in equally well before or after the club, preferably with a gin and tonic half-spilling out of your hand. The vocals are beautiful and sensuous, the beats are well-produced and eloquently moody, and the subject matter often intelligent. No surprise, then, that it's a former Depeche Mode member who signed these ladies up. *Alex Poesell*



JACK DANGERS FORBIDDEN PLANET REVISITED
Important/US/CD

Why would Meat Beat Manifesto's mastermind mess with Louis and Bebe Barron's untouchable 1956 soundtrack to *Forbidden Planet*, an ur-document of malevolent, spacey woobs, gurgles and twitters? Because Jack has the world's only functioning EMS Synthi 100, and, damn it, he's gonna use it. This recording, live from France's I.D.E.A.L. Festival, proves that Dangers is well-suited to subtly modify and capture the questing spirit of the Barrons' original (see "Battle With Invisible Monster" for proof). Disc two contains 50 snippets of sci-fi sound effects—dozens of vintage analog-synth emissions ripe for producers seeking instant threatening atmospheres and otherworldly textures. *Dave Segal*

DILLINJA MY SOUND (1993-2004)
Valve/UK/CD

A venerable godfather of the drum & bass scene, Dillinja has built a career out of concocting chest-rattling basslines and sucker-punch drums. Sounds easy enough, doesn't it? But one listen to this 11-year retrospective and it's easy to see that the master of the monster drop has definitely earned his keep and then some. Featuring classic bits alongside contemporary thunder, Dillinja's obsessive attention to the mastering process doesn't seem to have faded one bit as numbers like "The Angels Fell," "Hard Noise" and "Friday" sit comfortably alongside "Thugged Out Bitch," "Tudor Rose," and "Forsaken Dreams." Snatch on sight! *Chris Muniz*

DIPLO FLORIDA
Big Dada/UK/CD

This rising star has remixed DJ Shadow and his debut album features Martina Topley-Bird, but does Diplo really have the goods? Sounding at times like the contents of a garbage can dumped into a sampler, *Florida* matches tinkling pianos with faltering hip-hop beats and chicken scratch guitar and drunken horns with stuttering rhythms. But it's not so much the samples as how Diplo merges this mongrel stew together that makes *Florida* really sing. At times melancholy ("Sarah"), at times queasy ("Into the Sun" with Martina), *Florida* is for the anxious moments when indecision rules. *Ken Micallef*

DUBLEX INC. EIGHT EARS
Pulver/GER/CD

Four DJs might make for a few ideas too many, but the members of Stuttgart quartet Dublex Inc. are apparently all on the same page. Taking inspiration from dub and South American rhythms, *Eight Ears* aims squarely for the dancefloor, even on laidback numbers like "Sound of the Ebu" and "Queek," which makes wonderful use of a simple, scratchy sample. With flawless production and a healthy dose of funk, it appears that Dublex Inc. has just the right number of cooks in the kitchen. *Peter Nicholson*

EINSTURZENDE NEUBAUTEN KALTE STERNE—EARLY RECORDINGS
Mute/US/CD

Einsturzende Neubauten harvested punk rock from the weed patches, trespasser graves and broken concrete that surrounded the Berlin Wall. They literally made "industrial" music with drills, sanders and junk metal. *Kalte Sterne* compiles the band's early singles from 1980-82; it documents their birth as urban primitives banging away tribal rhythms with leader Blixa Bargeld throwing tantrums and whip-cracking his guitar like a sweatshop foreman. "Aufrecht Gehen" stands out for its haphazard locked groove, while "Pygmaeen" offsets samples of triumphant orchestras with barbarians attacking the opera house. *Kalte Sterne* is more vital than the work of the "industrial rock" scabs who later bankrupted the factory. *Cameron Macdonald*

EL-P COLLECTING THE KID
Def Jux/US/CD

In an effort to tide us over until the release of his next full-length, El-P throws us a bone with this mish-mash of unreleased tracks. The mostly instrumental collection

seems a little hastily thrown together, but contains plenty of the heavy beats and moody themes that are El's trademark. Two rapperless tracks stand out: a revamped "Leaving This Place" from Mr. Lif's album is fully realized, and a discarded Cannibal Ox track called "Feel Like A Ghost" is a dreamy and soulful slice of minimalism. Elsewhere, El-P dabbles in sexy electro ("Constellation Remix"), jazz ("Intrigue in The House of India"), and psych-rock ("Oxycontin" featuring Camu Tao). But while *Collecting the Kid* may satiate some fans, it's no replacement for his next master work. *DJ Anna*

JAKE FAIRLEY TOUCH NOT THE CAT
Paper Bag/CAN/CD

Toronto's Jake Fairley is an inexhaustible minimal techno maker and relentless punk rocker at heart. On *Touch Not*, Fairley pumps out 10 vigorous dancefloor killers—some accompanied by his own gritty Brit-pop vocals. Stepping beyond his singles on Sender and Dumb-Unit, this raw techno grindcore shuffles and drives with mind-numbing abrasiveness. Ultra-dis-

torted synthesizers splice cleanly through your body while mechanical melodies bring out the punk in all of us. Imagine Kompakt's Reinhard Voigt meets The Misfits, get out your best bottle of whiskey and *Touch Not The Cat*. *Sean O'Neal*

JULIAN FANE SPECIAL FORCES SHITMAT FULL ENGLISH BREAKFAST
Planet Mu/UK/CD

These debut albums, when compared side by side, are a microcosm of the consistently, contradictory nature of UK experimental electronic label Planet Mu. Julian Fane offers intricate, intriguing electronics with influences ranging from Radiohead to Autechre. At the opposite end of the spectrum, Shitmat favors roughneck ragga at 1,000 miles per hour, remakes of defunct TV theme tunes, and enough samples in the first 30 seconds alone to keep a copyright lawyer gainfully employed for the remainder of the year. The former is strong throughout; the latter brilliant in small doses—a formula that can easily be applied to this label as a whole. *Dave Stenton*



CROWN CITY ROCKERS

CROWN CITY ROCKERS EARTHTONES
Basement/US/CD

After four years in the trenches, a cross-country move, the departure of a key member, and a name change, Oakland's Crown City Rockers have finally released a definitive LP that reflects the band's overwhelming talent. While the five-member crew's organic jazz-hop snap takes a cue from early Roots, lush keys, instrumental interludes and extended arrangements lean towards the sunny soul jazz of mid-'70s Donald Byrd and Lonnie Smith. MC Raahshan Ahmad has truly elevated his game, unrolling worldly poetics with the unforced, syrupy flow of a hip-hop veteran; his delivery on "Another Day" is downright heroic. Airtight drumming and rolling bass blend seamlessly with crisp MPC beats, sprouting a unique fusion of live inspiration and sampled tradition. The anthemic "B-Boy" is rooted in classic hand-waving swagger, and "Heat," with its walloping horns, borders on Afrobeat. Spanning a full spectrum of styles and emotions, *Earhtones* paints a brilliant stroke across hip-hop's expanding landscape. *Jonathan Zwickel*

FRAUSDOTS COUTURE, COUTURE, COUTURE SubPop/US/CD

Draw that eyeliner on good and thick, kids—Frausdots’ debut wails with a sexy, Kohl-rimmed confidence. *Couture* surges open right away into grandiose Echo and the Bunnymen lushness with “Dead Wrong,” just begging for a sing-along. Frausdots hits it right with midtempo numbers like “Current Bedding,” filled to bursting with a dreamy guitar line, and “Fashion Death Trends,” which is so damn *catchy*, especially when Brent Rademaker pulls out his snarky falsetto over a kicking beat and coos, “Looks soooo cute on you!” Bitchy, pouty and yet darkly sweet, *Couture*’ll rot your teeth like c-c-c-cola. *Selena Hou*

FREQ NASTY BRING ME THE HEAD OF FREQ NASTY Skint/UK/CD

Rick James may have nosed his last, but his ego-splattered funk lurks amid the absolutely bad-ass beats of Freq Nasty’s latest. The album flounders at the outset, with awkward vocals and off-kilter beats, but it’s in the pike midway with hairy analog melodies and stellar guest performances by roots reggae maestro Junior Delgado, plus Roots Manuva and Yolanda. Culture pundits might dub it bashment, but the Freqster does whatever the fuck he wants—and *Bring Me The Head* is the sound of this native New Zealander ditching the homeland to hang with the Brixton Orcs. *Stacy Meyn*

GROWING THE SOUL OF THE RAINBOW AND THE HARMONY OF LIGHT THE DEAD TEXAN THE DEAD TEXAN Kranky/US/CD

Growing’s music is best listened to loud. Very loud. Their epic single-note drones are built of dense layers of detail—often resulting from feedback—that only come into range when played at extreme volumes. *The Soul of the Rainbow* (named after Color Organ inventor Bainbridge Bishop’s essay concerning color and sound) is somewhere near sublime, and seems

to fall in the color spectrum near indigo/violet. As The Dead Texan, Adam Wiltzie (Stars of the Lid) is Growing’s atmospheric neighbor, but he opts for more notes and in doing so shares more with Labradford. Meant to accompany filmmaker Christine Vantos’ work, the mood is expansive, claustrophobic and vaguely evocative of Eastern European New Wave film—which is to say, quite intriguing. *Alexis Georgopoulos*

HEADSET SPACESETTINGS Plug Research/US/CD

Plug Research founder Allen Avnessian was striving for a groundbreaking, all-out collaboration with a hodgepodge of his artists—what resulted is a collection of gimmicky leftfield hip-hop ditties and glitch-heavy jazz. Avnessian and Jimmy Tamborello (Dntel, The Postal Service) produced most of these gritty, slow-paced rhythms and melodies collaborating with players like John Tejada, Daedelus and Thomas Fehlmann. Though the names are respectable and the sound is trendy, the beats are ultimately lifeless, and they center all the attention on guest MCs like Beans, Lady Dragon and Subtitle. Headset presents cold fusion indie hip-hop for intellectuals that want to be down. *Sean O’Neal*

HECKER PV TRACKS Mego/AUS/CD

Florian Hecker is a leading man among the computer music enthusiasts, deservedly winning the 2003 Prix Ars Electronica for his last full-length, *Sun Pandamonium*. *PV Tracks*, on the other hand, could use some mincing. It does not, on any level, work as an LP—it’s entirely shapeless at the macro level, utterly engaging at the micro. The amorphousness of the whole detracts from the component parts, even as you engage it more intensely, but try not to let this take away from the runic and spectral qualities of the sound Hecker conjures on the most profoundly space-cosmic album I’ve heard this year. *J. David Mareton*

HEIRUSPECS A TIGER DANCING Razor & Tie/US/CD

The few lucky enough to have copped Atmosphere’s limited *Sad Clown Bad Dub 3* have already been introduced to Minnesota’s finest hip-hop band, Heiruspecs. *A Tiger Dancing* allows them to step away from their backing duties, putting MCs Felix and Muad’Dib front and center. Their musicianship is predictably tight, with pleasing jazzy overtones and sparse organic beats, but Heiruspecs ain’t the next Roots. *A Tiger Dancing* positions the group as a good live act—especially for the college crowd—but the album lacks the zest necessary to take it to the next level. *Ryan Romana*

RODNEY HUNTER HUNTER FILES G-Stone/AUS/CD

Let it be said that I don’t like most “smooth” music, and I can’t afford the \$10 drinks they serve in bars that play it. Still, if I was going to listen to nu-jazz, I could do a lot worse than this Rodney Hunter album. A Kruder & Dorfmeister contemporary, Hunter marries dub, bossa, R&B and house influences to a loose-jointed downtempo framework, then tweaks the effects and massages the bass. The result is a soundtrack to outdoor terraces at sunset and sweaty midnights in tightly-packed lounges, driven forward by outerspace synth touches and soul vocals from Farda P, Hubert Tubbs and Ken Cesar. Think Galliano and Sly & the Family Stone hot oil wrestling, and you’re halfway there. *Vivian Hoat*

J-ZONE A JOB AIN’T NUTHIN’ BUT WORK Fatbeats/US/CD

Like Ill Bill, J-Zone is a guilty pleasure—the fact that he takes delight in rapping about the most morally reprehensible behavior possible is part of his charm. While J-Zone’s persistent references to his third leg might grate on your nerves, his confrontational sense of humor results in some pretty great punchlines, creative disses (“A Friendly Game of Basketball”) and gut-busting shout-outs to his “ugly niggas worldwide” (“Kill Pretty”). As for funky beats, *A Job Ain’t Nuthin’ But Work* improves on last year’s *Sick of Bein’ Rich*, especially on the bouncy opening track, “Spoiled Rotten,” and the chorus of “Disco Ho.” *Rachel Swan*

JUKEBOXER IN THE FOOD CHAIN Absolutely Kosher/US/CD

LULLATONE LITTLE SONGS ABOUT RAINDROPS Audio Dregs/US/CD

As Jukeboxer, Brooklynite Noah Wall is a one-man band with an encyclopedic knowledge of 20th century music. At his most deliberately pop, he conjures up *Stars on ESP*-era His Name Is Alive, Brian Wilson or perhaps Magnetic Fields, if they’d been abandoned in the forest to fend for themselves. His other, arguably more interesting side, finds him straying like a dosed Terry Riley into intricately arranged psychedelic folk territory—the raga-banjo “Banji” or the Ry Cooder swingset squeak and drone of “Thursday” being prime examples. Shawn James Seymour (Lullatone) shares Wall’s taste for looped sound. Parades of cascading bells, toy xylophones, plastic pianos and small stringed instruments all take part in Seymour’s remarkable plight to paint color through tintinnabulation, and the result is wonderful. *Alexis Georgopoulos*

KELPE SEA INSIDE BODY DC/UK/CD

It’s often cited that water makes up 60% of the human body, with organs such as the brain clocking in at over 75% liquid. Kelp’s *Sea Inside Body* is an ode to our aqueous nature that shares a melodic simplicity with Plaid and Boards of Canada. The album is all warbling synths and amniotic ambience interposed with quirky sampling. It’s excellent, marred only by the addition of nonsensical samples of British females prattling on about painfully mundane matters. The bio mentions that Kelp lifted many of the samples from his day job as a video editor, but they distract from the narrative of the album rather than add to it. *Brock Phillipø*

CHRISTIAN KLEINE REAL GHOSTS City Center Offices/GER/CD

Germany’s Kleine, of Herrmann & Kleine fame, initiates a new direction with his second solo effort, away from the plink-plonk of past expeditions. One misses the Dr. Seuss of electrics as he trifles with more conventional rock and roll arrangements. There are moments of euphoric and no doubt delightful gain, but the directness of this album is too symmetrical, truncating his vision at precisely the wrong moments. *Real Ghosts* leaves one haunted with nostalgia for the past, while remaining entirely respectful of the present and Kleine’s musical acumen. *J. David Mareton*

KNIFEHANDCHOP HOW I LEFT YOU Tigerbeat6/US/CD

Everyone’s gone concept album these days—even the hyperactive hardcore gabba/ragga kids. On *How I Left You*, Knifehandchop tells a breakup story through music. We start happily with “Goin’ Back to Scarborough,” which races melodies around and past a chunk of Dr. Dre. But by a few tracks in, even the sweetest piano lines start to become overwhelmed by noise, as on “Girlfriend.” The BPMs rarely let up, and as the hour grows later they signify more menace than excitement. Finally, Knifey finds solace where all the newly dumped seem to find it—dancing until dawn to “94 Hardcore.” *Rob Geary*

MELCHIOR PRODUCTIONS THE MEANING Playhouse/GER/CD

The microhouse massive has been jonesing for another album to blow them away like Ricardo Villalobos’ *Alcachofa* did in 2003. *The Meaning* runs a Villalobos-like 77 minutes, but Melchior’s productions are more skeletal than his Chilean chum’s, and his idea of party tracks is much more low-key than your typical house gathering. *The Meaning*’s booty-nodding bass and head-bumping beats are seemingly swathed in crushed velvet, while Melchior lavishes attention to finicky surface tics like bloopy synth motifs, undulant flutes and truncated soul-diva exhortations. He places everything in the stereo field with the delicacy of a butterfly collector handling his prizes. Yeah, this is 2004’s *Alcachofa*. *Dave Segal*

MOCHIPET UZUMAKI Component/US/CD

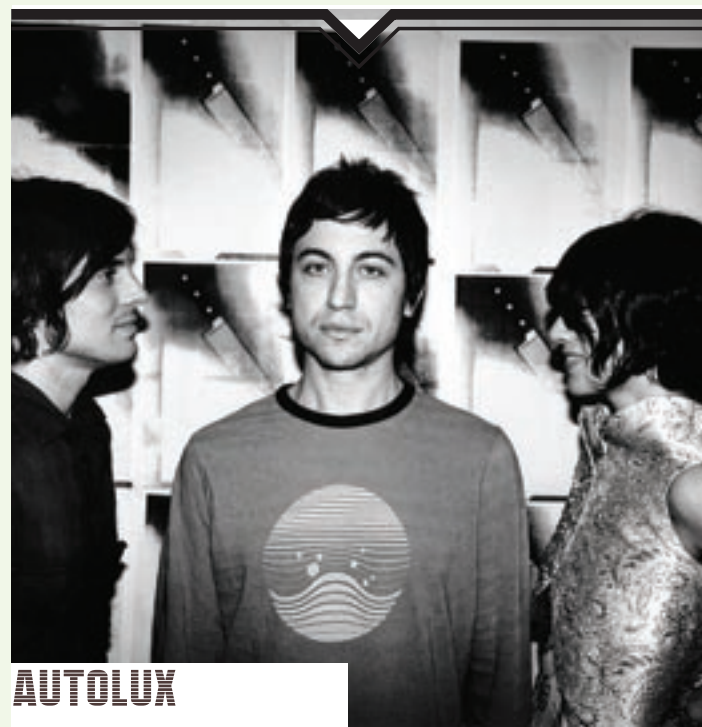
Mochipet’s high-tech kinetics are on full display here, with simple bare-bones melodies heavily peppered by stuttering, double-dutch robotic barks and growls. “Labha” has drill & bass jabbering relentlessly over haunting violin strains, while pretty “Moha” gets all bombastic Aphex. “Dosa”’s heavy percussion eventually subsides into a sweet little piano motif and some plucked strings, jumpy and at times intriguingly pentatonic. Meanwhile, “Polka Electronic Death Country” is a freaking fantastic concept—Mochipet’s rendition puts the emphasis on the “death” part, all hellfire roars and pure unrest. *Selena Hou*

MONO WALKING CLOUD AND DEEP RED SKY, FLAG FLUTTERED AND THE SUN SHINED Temporary Residence/US/CD

Good god, this is sweeping, emotional music. For letting doves free, for floating on your back naked in the warm ocean water while the big dipper watches over you, for riding a buffalo over the smooth Idaho plains in slow motion. Now, in high school-ese: Japan’s Mono are the sensitive artistic types that only rarely opened their mouths in class and when they did mysteriously perfection emerged; meanwhile, Godspeed You Black Emperor! were the nasty overweight black-clad kids smoking cigarettes out by the railroad tracks and calling everyone pussies. Mono has opened their mouths again. *Brian Paul*

MOVING UNITS DANGEROUS DREAMS Rx-Palm Pictures/US/CD

Prompting a hipster to dance (or lift a finger, for that matter) is a bitch. So when a band comes along and



AUTOLUX

AUTOLUX FUTURE PERFECT DMZ/US/CD

Every once in a while you hear a band that reminds you of all your favorite bands, but none of them at the same time. Such is the case with Los Angeles trio Autolux, who channel the greats of early ’90s indie rock on *Future Perfect*, picking obtuse reference points to keep from sounding retro. There’s plenty of *Sister-era* Sonic Youth here: check the deliberately soft and sweet vocals nudging up against great walls of guitar feedback and the hypnotizing guitar/bass interplay—punctuated by intermittent squalls—of “Subzero Fun.” But Autolux lacks touchstones in art rock and post-punk, veering closer to the undulating blankets of sound popularized by My Bloody Valentine and the warm bassline rockers of Lush, and at times touching on Tortoise’s micro-songs. This isn’t a complex record, and Autolux is more genre-defying than genre-defining. Still, in a climate of overtly referential releases, it’s high time for a really good rock record that doesn’t require a lofty pedigree or a labor-intensive image to get by. Forget past participles and the present tense, I’ll have the *Future Perfect*. *Vivian Hoat*



HINT HINT

HINT HINT YOUNG DAYS THE SIX PARTS SEVEN EVERYWHERE AND RIGHT HERE Suicide Squeeze/US/CD

Seattle indie Suicide Squeeze knows how to pick bands (We Ragazzi, Minus The Bear) that deconstruct the canonical foundations laid by Public Image Ltd., Talking Heads, Wire and Slint, without being confined by them. In other words, *Young Days* sounds like John Lydon’s astral spirit settled into New Order’s *Movement*, but its flavor doesn’t end there. Although vocalist Peter Quirk displays a barely restrained sneer on every song, runaway train drum work by Peter Lajeunesse pulls *Young Days* out of fourth gear into post-punk overdrive. His dynamism drives a series of complicated tracks that redefine sonic and emotional estrangement. Speaking of estrangement, The Six Parts Seven has made a comfortable career out of avoiding vocals altogether. Their sparkling arrangements have historically been ornate, layered affairs, different from the murkier post-rock of peers Mogwai, Sigur Ros and Tortoise (their best point of reference). While Tortoise favors its guitar tone in lower registers, Jay and Allen Karpinski’s fretwork is bright, crystalline and subdued. It’s not everyone’s cup of tea, but once you acquire the taste, it’s hard not to get addicted. *Scott Thill*

lights a fire under their carefully considered britches, it’s time to fucking celebrate. This month, the band is called Moving Units, and they have been bringing hot, slutty women with good taste into LA venues for over a year now. A huge bonus, of course, is their neck-snapping brand of white funk, white heat. Not one raw-throated track is a throwaway on this fine maiden LP. Just lose the Gang Of Four and A Certain Ratio fixations, and I’ll re-lacquer the dancefloor myself. *Carleton Curtio*

MUNK APERITIVO Gomma/GER/CD

The Italian/German duo Munk runs the so-hip-it-hurts Gomma label. Whilst it’s often fun to poke fun at those who favor style over substance, *Aperitivo* has both in equal measure and, as a result, is annoyingly good. The best electronic music is often the simplest and, whilst Munk operate in the hazy punk-funk borders between dance and indie, their pared down approach returns much more cohesive results than the cluttered, over-complicated contributions of contemporaries like The Rapture and !!! . *Dave Stenton*

NEOTROPIC WHITE RABBITS Mush/US/CD

Riz Maslen returns with her trusty sampler, but that’s not all. Maslen uses live musicians to inspire

and flesh out her computer mixes, *White Rabbits* being an exceptional example of personality-filled instrumentalists streaming in and around her atmospheric galaxy of freak sounds and disturbing effects. Pushing the live-programmed genre forward, tracks like “New Cross” recall guitarist Bill Frisell. The album grows progressively darker, as later number “Joe Luke” dives subterranean into an ambient horror-show world and closer “If We Were Trees” is a loony lark of laughing children with Maslen croaking, “You’re doing my head in.” *Ken Micallef*

OH NO THE DISRUPT Stones Throw/US/CD

The two highest compliments you can pay Michael Jackson’s debut are that his beats fall only *somewhat* short of his sibling’s, and that his rhymes are way better—the first a mighty achievement, the second less so. Before we get to Michael (a.k.a. Oh No), let us note that his brother Otis (a.k.a. Madlib) herein outdoes himself, his six contributions suffused with so many dizzying feints as to render their digestion impossible before the end of, say, 2010. For his part, Oh No shows skills in spades, especially on “The Ride,” which edges out Lil Flip’s “Game Over” for the title of year’s best Nintendo anthem. Yes, the Jackson family juggernaut is upon us, and we are pleased. *Martin Turenne*

THE PLANT LIFE
THE RETURN OF JACK SPLASH
Counterflow/US/CD

It's one disc, but this debut album is more like a three-act play narrated by a chorus of falsetto voices that take on a range of characters over 19 tracks. There's the MC rapping over scratches as the mood of the record builds, followed by a smooth talking ladies' man emulating funk masters of the past, underscored by sleazy basslines. The album then explodes into a fast-paced, guitar-ridden soul party before winding down to melodic whispers about love that complete the flawless course of this album. *Jenn Marston*

THE ROOTS THE TIPPING POINT
Geffen/US/CD

Born from extensive jam sessions, *The Tipping Point* finds The Roots becoming drummer/liner note maestro Questlove's band. Opening with the languid Sly Stone tribute "Star," the band sands most of the edges off a coherent album that slides by perhaps a touch too easily. Scott Storch lends two lean, sparkling pop productions that contrast nicely with Quest's thicker and dirtier sounds (like dub-rock nugget "Guns Are Drawn"). Vocalist Black Thought sounds a bit disinterested outside of two ferocious back-to-back old-school jams, but as the photo of a young Malcolm on the cover implies, The Roots are still just getting started. *Rob Czary*

SAVATH & SAVALAS MAÑANA
Warp/UK/CD

The fanboys may gravitate toward Prefuse 73, but Guillermo Scott Herren's acoustical alter ego Savath & Savalas attracts revolutionaries. (Have you made the Gil Scott Heron connection yet?) His own personal sketch of Spain, Herren's *Mañana* grows from the soil of *Apropa't* with a similar beatific haze, but incorporates distinct rhythms and electronic grace notes that are decidedly Prefuse-like. With tracks like the restless "No Puedo De Cidir"—discernibly beat-driven with, *gasp*, a sample—you might say Herren has gone full-circle. *Carleton Curtis*

JANEK SCHAEFER COLD STORAGE
Bianco-Valente/Mass
SELF ORGANIZING STRUCTURES
DSP/ITA/CD + DVD

Italian label DSP takes a step forward and back. Sound artist and three-arm turntable DJ Janek Schaefer explores the fantasia of warehouse noises in *Cold Storage*. He collages sounds like carts banging into walls, wheels squeaking on cracked concrete and distant chatter amplified 10 times. Schaefer wisely avoids digital processing in favor of letting the vibrant sounds be. Meanwhile, Bianco-Valente/Mass creates minimal glitch-techno pieces in the image of supposedly *Self Organizing Structures*. Old timey clicks 'n' cuts, you see. Each music video on its DVD is a looped shot, whether it is a petri dish zoo or a crawling stalker's view. Stare at your fingernails instead. *Cameron Macdonald*

SECRET MOMMY HAWAII 5.0
FLOSSIN LEAD SINGER
Ache/CAN/CD

Secret Mommy's two previous discs for Orthlorng Musork subverted stoic laptop music with surreal mischievousness. The five-track EP *Hawaii 5.0* continues this Vancouver producer's discombobulation of glitch pop. Here he uses a trip to Hawaii as an excuse to turn its slack key guitar, steel drum, beach balls, birds, fruits and drinks into an orgy of staccato, computerized beats and DSP tomfoolery. Flossin is Miguel Depedro (Kid606), Christopher Willits and Hella drummer Zach Hill. Combining No Wave angularity, free-jazz energy, and noise-rock aggression, Flossin's 13 off-the-cuff cuts are exhilarating. Hill's manic-oppressive drumming sounds so *wrong* for Willits' pointillist guitar and Kid606's luminous laptop tone painting, that it actually works like a charm. *Dave Segal*

MATTHEW SHIPP HARMONY AND ABYSS
Thirsty Ear/US/CD

Between collaborations with artists like E-P, pianist Matthew Shipp has returned to an ongoing project: a set of small-group jazz records fully integrating bits of hip-hop and electronics. Shipp's working group has ripped through several records in this vein, and *Harmony and Abyss* showcases the near-telepathic rapport they have earned. The improv-oriented pieces fly by at high tempos, with Shipp's percussive piano at the center of the storm. But the group works so well that Shipp hardly appears on open, electronic-oriented pieces such as "String Theory," where twisted textures and noises take center stage. *Rob Czary*

SLAM YEAR ZERO
Soma/SCOT/CD

Known for their deft pacing between Detroit techno, Chicago house and electro-funk, the new album from Glasgow's veteran composers Stuart McMillan and Orde Meikle offers a satisfying punch of the duo's trademark dark, emotional grooves and sweeping "weeeee-er" synths. While the preachy, why-can't-we-just-get-along lyrics on "This World" feel overwrought, "Blow Your Mind" displays Slam at their best—working stark funk elements into simple but powerfully churning grooves. The interplay between spine-quiveringly soulful vocals and rough electronic beats on "Bright Lights Fading" shows why, even after a decade, Slam remains one of the gutsiest dancefloor acts around. *Janet T30u*

SPALDING ROCKWELL KATE
Defend/US/CD
SCREAM CLUB
DON'T BITE YOUR SISTER
Scream Club/US/CD

Call it punk, electro or disco-punk, but these albums aren't so much linked by genre as the theme of chicks kicking ass. Spalding Rockwell pounds this point home on its debut album, which hints at electroclash, screams like punk rock and makes you want to run around trashing hotel rooms. The girls of Olympia, WA-based Scream Club take this already brash sound to the next level by throwing in a hip-hop twist, then peppering their album with thoughtful, hilarious and sensual lyrics bound to give the other girls a run for their money. *Jenn Marston*

STEEL PULSE AFRICAN HOLOCAUST
Ras/US/CD

It's been seven years since Steel Pulse's last proper studio album, which rightfully garnered a Grammy nod, and 26 since their groundbreaking debut, which remains a critical highpoint. On *African Holocaust*, these British Rastafarian heavyweights remain a force—political, rootsy and polished as ever. Conceivably, this would be the only complaint about the album—the studio work serves up none of the grimy soul that typically radiates from roots reggae, or the band's live shows. While the arrangements and lyrical content are top notch, one can sense a maturity and buffed clarity to David Hinds' reggae vision that some may find slightly alienating. *J. David Maraton*

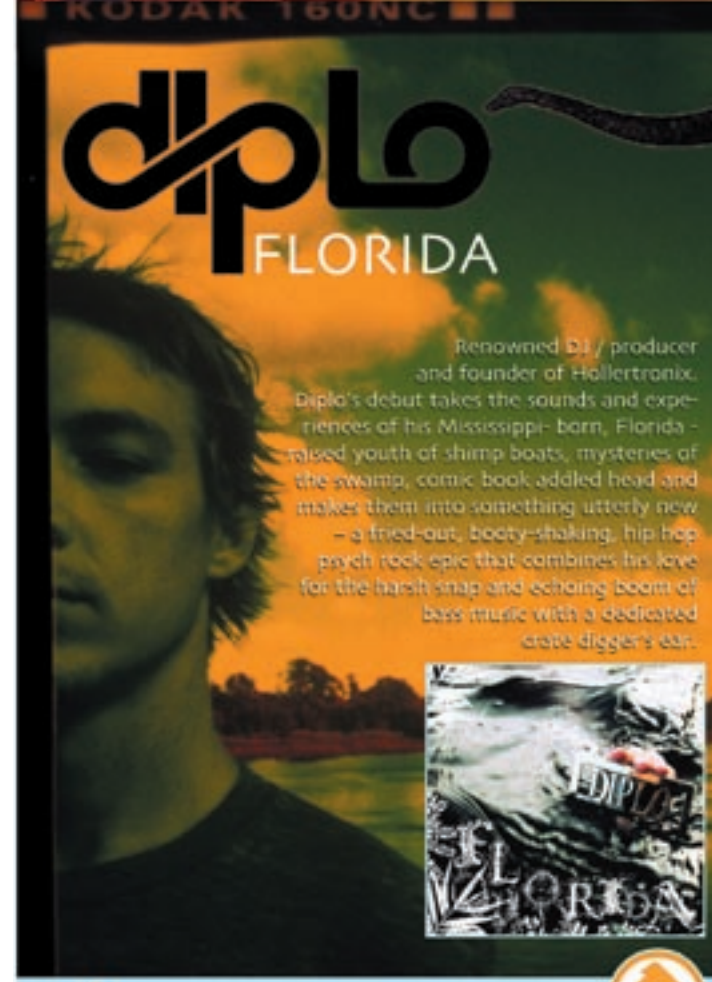
Solid Steel Presents
AMON TOMBIN

Recorded live in Melbourne in late 2003, this set catches Amon Tobin in a two deck/Final Scratch mix contains reworkings of some of his classic tracks, exclusive cuts, and custom mixes of tunes from the likes of The Velvet Underground, Dizzee Rascal, Jurassic 5 and loads more. Best of all, no earplugs needed.

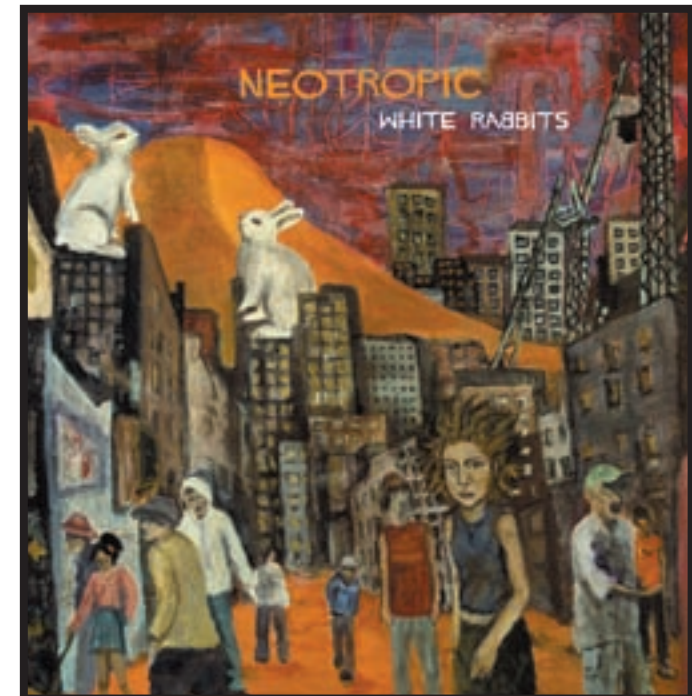


diplo
FLORIDA

Renowned DJ / producer and founder of Hollertronix, Diplo's debut takes the sounds and experiences of his Mississippi-born, Florida-raised youth of shimp boats, mysteries of the swamp, comic book addled head and makes them into something utterly new — a fried-out, booty-shaking, hip hop psych rock epic that combines his love for the harsh snap and echoing boom of bass music with a dedicated crate digger's ear.

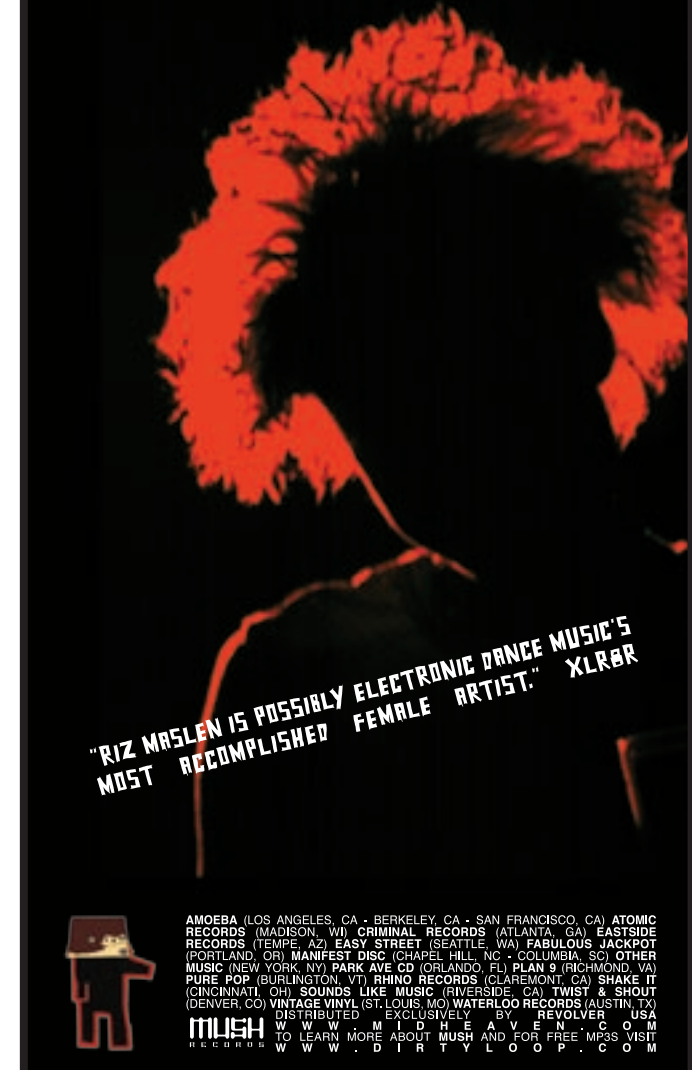


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NEOTROPIC

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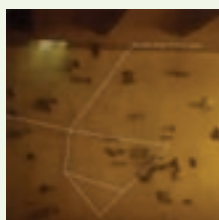
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DMX KREW

DMX KREW THE COLLAPSE OF THE WAVE FUNCTION
Rephlex/UK/12

Ed DMX can pack more excitement into a "mini-album" than most people could if they had 19 tracks to fill. And it's a testament to this electro stalwart's consummate skill that, within two minutes of putting needle to this wax, three *XLRR* staffers popped their heads into my office, ears cocked, and asked what I was listening to. *The Collapse...* finds Ed operating with many of the same tools he uses to make his classic Detroit poplocking soundtracks, but throwing away the formula. The record contains brooding beatless soundscapes, shimmering and kinetic downtempo acid and dark bodyrock, but hits its stride with the bittersweet synthetic lullaby "Jet Lag" and "Tonight (Track)," which almost sounds like a dub version on an old Depeche Mode single. *The Collapse...* makes the familiar sound fresh again. It's not groundbreaking, but it doesn't have to be—it's infinitely listenable, instead. Looks like DMX cribbed notes from friends' (Plaid, Aphex Twin, Luke Vibert) classic albums, added his own flavor, and then aced the test. *Tyra Bangs*





SUBTLE A NEW WHITE
Lex/UK/CD

You might know Adam "Doseone" Drucker and Jeffrey "Jel" Logan from Themselves, or their many other hip-hop experimental projects on the Anticon label. Teaming up with four other musicians under their new Subtle moniker, Drucker and Logan infuse their project with an almost psychedelic sensibility—it's less hip-hop than mood music. As on their other albums, Drucker and Logan excel at shaping hidden moments of sheer loveliness amidst unpredictable beat structures. Check "FK.O." for a peek into the jittery yet optimistic mind of Doseone—and one of the warmest examples of electronic music with a hip-hop heart. *Janet Tsou*

SWAYZAK
LOOPS FROM THE BERGERIE
!K7/US/CD

Even though Swayzak's fourth album title is inspired by a Gainsbourg soundtrack, the duo offers an overtly English take on what is frequently perceived as a Teutonic music. This appears not only via their apparent love of New Order, but by their deployment of friend/protégé Richard Davis as the predominant guest vocalist; his voice, which reminds of no one so much as Robert Wyatt, is infused into an amalgamation of dub and techno more readily associated with Cologne and Berlin. Slick and bouncy, *Loops From The Bergerie* is a fine record but, oddly, there's nothing quite so potent as Davis' own "Bring Me Closer," a track issued via Swayzak's 240 Volts imprint. *David Hemingway*

TERRESTRE SECONDARY INSPECTION
Static Discos/MEX/CD

A former member of Mexico's Nortec Collective, Fernando Corona's music is markedly moodier than that of his Tijuana-bred counterparts. Corona typically records as Murcof, but this album marks his solo debut under the Terrestre tag. The strident horn riffs and jubilant bounce typical of the Nortec sound have been replaced by a darker fusion of skeletal techno structures, minimal dub aesthetics and a barely noticeable tinge of Tejano and other Latin music. Corona's sense of dramatic tension is his strongest point though, therefore it comes as no surprise the producers of *Amores Perros* recently asked him to soundtrack their newest film, *Nicotina*. *Brock Phillips*

TRIOSK MOMENT RETURNS
Leaf/UK/CD

Jazz trios jumping into electronic waters is no big deal anymore, but Sydney's Triosk are more resourceful than most. Sure, they can swing (as on the ominous "Chronosynclastic Infundibula"), but they also pre-treat their improvisations with freak loops, exotic self-sampling and Pro Tools splice and dice angles. As a result, *Moment Returns* moves into lush terrain that imagines Keith Jarrett soloing in a lone pod set on a course to outer space. The gurgles and gasses that accompany the "Birdland"-like bassline of "Re-Ignite" and the vinyl crackles of "Awake" help imbue this trio's jazz with an electrified hothouse fragrance. *Ken Micallef*

TUSSLE KLING KLANG
Troubleman/US/CD

Imagine the scene: the Blue Man Group battles the cast of *Stomp* in a black-lit warehouse while King Tubby broadcasts the mayhem through a transistor radio equipped with a Volkswagen-sized subwoofer. Tussle takes a slice of reedy, early '80s post-punk and mellows it with dub's heavy-lidded throb and cavernous reverb. A drum circle's worth of fluttering percussion—rim shots, hand claps, snare hits, cow bell—keeps the push-pull from tearing down the middle. This LP doesn't stray

from the funky precedent previously established by the San Francisco four-piece; rather, it provides a deeply hypnotizing, fully-developed extension of it. *Jonathan Zwickel*

UNIT I CAME HERE TO TELL YOU HOW IT'S GOING TO BEGIN
Co.ad.audio/US/CD

The world has changed dramatically in the five years since Unit released his debut, *The Narcoleptic Symphony*, but Cristian Fleming's sonic forays are as cryptic as ever. Microscopic scrapings of noise coalesce from chaos into whorls of rhythm; it's the aural equivalent of running a magnet over a scattered handful of iron shavings while watching them fuse into a single entity. These granular symphonies, complemented by sweeping synth melodies, call to mind vintage Vangelis or Aphex Twin. While his approach is not as revolutionary as it was at the turn of the millennium, few producers manage to operate in both a macro and micro sense as effectively as Unit does. *Brock Phillips*

UNKLE NEVER, NEVER LAND
Global Underground/UK/CD

I don't understand why people hate on UNKLE's 1998 album, *Psyence Fiction*, nor do I get why they think *Never, Never Land* is better. While pining and paranoia make comebacks here—as do famous-maker vocals from Stone Roses' Ian Brown—DJ Shadow's imagination does not. The falsetto of James Lavelle's old friend Richard File replaces Shadow's electro here, and there's a bit of 4/4 juice in UNKLE's blender now, making for a more clubby blend that goes down easier. But despite decent tracks and the duo's attention to mood and songwriting, *Never, Never Land* is missing the balls that made past installments so novel. *Liz Cordingley*

SAUL WILLIAMS SAUL WILLIAMS
Fader/US/CD

The most recognizable poet in America might have a way with words, but he's got an ear for beats as well. Williams' self-titled second full-length is stacked with his own homemade syncopation; and, coupled with his rapid-fire linguistics, the multitasking artist might just embed his patented punk-hop into popular consciousness. He's got good company; bad-asses as diverse as Zack de la Rocha (Rage Against the Machine), Serj Tankian (System of a Down) and Ikey Owens (The Mars Volta) show up for the proceedings, helping inject steamrollers like "Grippa," "Act III, Scene 2" and "Black Stacey" into brainstems worldwide. If contemporary "hip-hop is lying on the side of the road/half dead to itself," as Williams rants in "Telegram," then this potent dose of hybrid fury and fun should be able to resuscitate it without too much trouble. *Scott Thill*

WOLF EYES BURNED MIND
SubPop/US/CD

One of the most notorious noise groups to arise from underground American cassette culture, Ann Arbor, MI's Wolf Eyes has produced somewhere around 50 recordings since their first release in 1996. Chronicled on their own Hanson and American Tapes labels as well as hot shit imprints such as Bulb and Troubleman, the current trio of Aaron Dilloway, Nathan Young and John Olson specializes in the kind of post-apocalyptic, glass-shattering, over-amplified sludge howl that you thought only came to you in nightmares. And *Burned Mind* is no exception. Reference points Throbbing Gristle, New Blockaders, Whitehouse and Swans may provide clues, but the pure horror of *Burned Mind* must be experienced firsthand to fully understand. *Alexis Georgopoulos*



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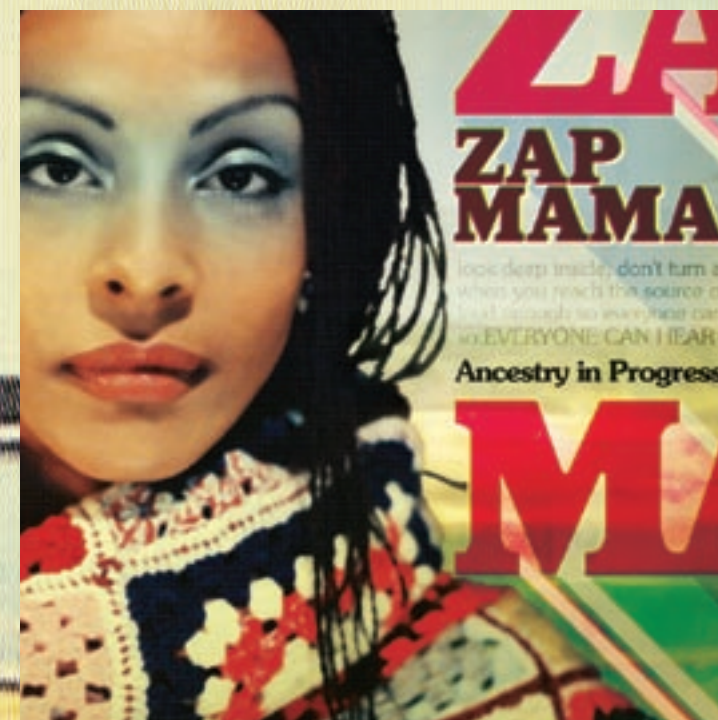


DYNAMITE MC

DYNAMITE MC THE WORLD OF DYNAMITE
Strong/UK/CD

Dynamite MC is no stranger to fans of the UK drum & bass or garage scenes, having worked extensively with Roni Size's Full Cycle crew and a gamut of breakbeat producers. *The World of Dynamite* is his first full-on foray into the world of studio production, and it's not always palatable. But for a debut, it's impressive in scope, showing Dynamite to be light years ahead of his peers in terms of concept and sheer innovation. Like three albums in one, *The World of Dynamite* takes the listener through various rooms at a club, each focusing on a separate genre: hip-hop, 2-step garage and drum & bass. Along the way, Dynamite links up with top-notch producers like Skitz, TNT, Wookie, Origin Unknown, Marky & XRS and High Contrast, and chats it up alongside fellow lyrical heavyweights Elephant Man and Skibadee. The UK hip-hop sounds a bit underdeveloped and will take some getting used to, but there's no doubt that room two and three are where the party's at. Bombastic club anthems "Rush the DJ," "Ride," "Hotness," "The Scene," and "Gold" hold down this record, making it more than worth the price of admission. *Chris Muniz*

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Copperpot

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Photo: Orri

▲ Müm

The word "klein" means small in German and, in terms of music industry clout, independent Klein Records is indeed Lilliputian. But don't be misled. One listen to *All Stars Vol. 1* and it is clear that this is a label run by people who are ambitious, and anything but small-minded.

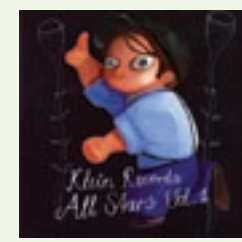
Klein happily sits in what music journalists would have you think is an awkward space. Ignoring neighboring trends, the imprint cockily plonks itself down in the grey area between club culture and the indie scene, an area where guitar pop, dub and electronica—say, Creation, Trojan and Warp—manage to find solace in each other.

This is no bad place to be, for this is the home of real music lovers. Purists only ever become experts in something specific at the expense of everything else. Good music is to be found everywhere and the Klein guys know it. With this comes a willingness to let their disparate set of artists take risks and accept the odd rough edge. Indeed, *All Stars* is no document of slickly fashioned grooves made for members-only bars—it's more of a celebration of the treasure-rich second-hand thrift store.

Accordingly, this compilation is a gold mine of unreleased and vinyl-only sounds that shows how far Klein has come since its inception in Vienna in 1996. The All Stars are a broad team, with UK duo Stratus batting first. Mat Anthony and Martin Jenkins first showed great promise with their bewitching remixes of Lambchop, Calexico and Serge Gainsbourg. Here, they collaborate with folkly vocalist Howie Beck on "Uplink" before parting with the seriously groovy Padded Cell remix of new single "Vapour." One of the label's most visible artists, Seelenluft, also makes his mark with Joakim's dub of "Come Along" and "Baby Baby." Riding high on the recent success of "I Can See Clearly Now" (which featured The Jesus & Mary Chain's Jim Reid on vocals), Seelenluft is now all set to produce the Stereo

COMP REVIEWS 10.04

KLEIN RECORDS ALL STARS VOL.1
 Klein/AUS/CD



MC's new album and tour under his new moniker Silver City Bob.

Other highlights come in the form of head-nodding beats from Müm and Sofa Surfers and the pleasurable pop of Princess Him. More surprising and unsettling are the ragga-infected dance steps of Stereotyp Meets Al'Haca and the typically twisted worldview of Kevin Martin (better known as The Bug). These tracks show that Klein isn't content to allow you to drift off in a smoky haze—they're quite comfortable demanding your attention.

With Mika's superbly poppy "Interesting Times" (mixed by label boss Christian Candid) and key player I-Wolf's versatile sounds bringing up the rear, this is one of those rare compilations that, despite being full of diverse styles, holds together to form an album. *All Stars Vol. 1* is the sound of a label hitting its stride, sounding fresh as ever despite being eight years old. And truly, there is nothing small about that. *Rob Wood*



STE VAN B

THE HIDDEN CITY: SOUND PORTRAITS FROM GÖTEBORG

Sub Rosa/BEL/CD
PLAYGROUND 009: FROM GONKYBURG WITH LOVE
Ecco Chamber/AUS/CD

Goddamn, Gonkyburg's (as Sweden's Gothenburg is referred to by locals) got it going on! Beyond the broken nu-jazz purveyed by the likes of Ernesto and Quant, these two compilations show that there are far more flavors in the Swedish stew. *The Hidden City* zooms in on the most minimal elements of sound. Many of the Göteborg musicians represented here are also visual artists, and experimentation is echoed by Lars Carlsson's abstract glass tapings on "Pavers" and the subterranean scratch of Anders Ilar's "Shorthand." Meanwhile, *Playground* heads straight to the dancefloor. The compilation, selected by Swell Session and Ste Van B, starts off slow with relaxed joints by England's Solid Groove and Canada's Moonstarr & John Kong before going absolutely nuts with the crazed screeching of Opaque's take on Dom Um Romao's "Lake of Perseverance" and the truly wild "Balkan Hot Step" from N.O.H.A., which pairs broken beats and acidic bass with Eastern European clarinet. If I can scam a ticket, Gothenburg is definitely where I'm going. *Peter Nicholson*



AMMUNITION: MIXED BY MIKE PARADINAS Planet Mu/UK/CD

Label founder Mike Paradinas is possibly the only person on earth who likes every track in the vast Planet Mu discography, such is the diverse—equal parts dazzling and deranged—nature of the music. Who better to mix a "best of" compilation, then? *Ammunition* contains 34 tracks in 80 minutes; as listener, you're kept almost as busy as the DJ—checking the track-list during the frequent moments of genius, jerking involuntarily to the chaotic grooves and dashing to a designated safe place when it all gets too much. *Dave Stenton*

BUCOLIQUE VOL. 2 Arbouse/FRA/CD

This French label, based in Montrozier, delivers a mixed bag of serene electronic frolic and abstract experimentalism designed to complement your collection of Warp and Morr Music discs. The 17-tracker gently commences with Pimmon's shoegazing ambient wash, like falling asleep on a secluded beach at sunset. It's followed by playfully adorable glitch tunes from Designer and Gel, before EU dives deep into Orby atmospheric. Sybarite, dDamage and Marumari deliver laid-back rhythms touching on blip-hop and mellow IDM, before the album evolves through dreamy, beatless drone from Yellow6, Velma and Ramon Carda and closes with sweet guitar-laden pop from Ma Chérie For Painting, Thousand & Bramier and Girls in Hawaii. *Sean O'Neal*

CAMBODIAN CASSETTE ARCHIVES: KHMER FOLK AND POP MUSIC VOL.1

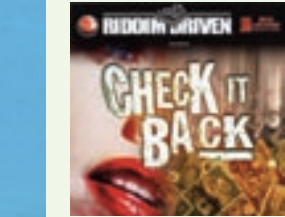
BROKEN HEARTED DRAGONFLIES: INSECT ELECTRONICA FROM SOUTHEAST ASIA

Sublime Frequencies/US/CD

These compilations may be this year's most remarkable. *Cambodian* amasses tapes of Cambodian music salvaged from an Oakland, CA, library. The songs, combining traditional Khmer folk with garage-rock, schmaltzy synth-pop and even arena metal, were recorded in and outside Cambodia between the '60s and '90s—during Pol Pot's genocidal reign. While the music celebrates the good life, there is still sadness in knowing that many of these artists were buried in the killing fields. *Broken Hearted* contains untreated field recordings of Southeast Asian insect populations. The swarms create timbres akin to synthesizer patches, brilliantly dissolving the distinction between the electronic and the organic. *Cameron Macdonald*

CARBON Mirex/GER/CD 2XH VS. HHR VOL.1 Hydra Head/US/2xCD

Breakcore and death metal are natural bedfellows. Both genres reduce beats and melodies into a skittering blur that leaves many begging for another fix. *Carbon's* 20 breakcore skirmishes keep the oil fires burning, with Donna Summer dicing up "Hotel California"—



esque guitar ballads and End launching a spy-flick raveup. *2xH Vs. HHR* pits one disc of death metal against another of meditative ambient-noise. Orthreilm's math metal gracefully disorients, while Gezoleen's psychobilly *danse macabre* might awaken the glue-sniffer in you. Elsewhere, Final's narcoleptic synths ascend into the acid-raining heavens, while Kid606's cosmic synths patiently drip like an IV bag. *Cameron Macdonald*

DJ CER: THROWBACK ATTACK Warlock/US/CD

Although the crusty beats and slaps on DJ Cer's *Throwback Attack* might gall some listeners, the stars of this compilation—pioneers like Jungle Brothers and T La Rock—sound more infectious than most hot rappers *du jour*. Moreover, you don't need an encyclopedia to understand Dimples D ("Sucker DJ") or Cash Money and Marvelous ("Ugly People Be Quiet"), who built their rhymes around punchlines, rather than concepts. If you favor authenticity over ideology, and scrappy boom-bap over sophistication, you're in for a treat: *Throwback Attack* is a grimier, more nuanced flashback mix than you'd find on your FM dial. *Rachel Swan*

DRUM & BASS ARENA: FABIO & GROOVERIDER Resist/UK/2XCD

The Drum & Bass Arena website chooses wisely on this release, pairing the godfather dons of the genre on this double CD. Fabio lays down his singularly funky mix of rolling beats and the world's most buttery basslines. Influences from lover's rock (Calibre) to cinematic soundscapes (High Contrast) butt up against Breakage's natty dubwise movements, breathing new life into liquid funk. Meanwhile, Grooverider—the Mr. Hyde of this duo—beats you into submission by unleashing monster tuneage from Dillinja, Hive, and DJ Fresh, among others. Rough and smooth. *Ryan Romana*

FABRICLIVE 17: AIM Fabric/UK/CD

Aim (producer Andy Turner) was once photographed leaping from a dilapidated jetty in the pouring rain near his home in the UK's Lake District. It was an appropriately apposite image, locating Turner and his music outside of hip-hop's usual urban environment and obsessions. Turner bookends this adorable mix album with tracks from Grand Central label mates Tony D and Fingathing. In between, the DJ draws on melodic hip-hop and rare funk from the likes of The Village Callers, A Tribe Called Quest and Lewis Parker. But, nicely, Turner also underpins the set with a curious pastoralism, directing the mood via James Yorkston's rustic folk and Boards of Canada's bucolic electronica. *David Hemingway*

THE HUMAN ELEMENT High Times/CAN/CD

A compilation of wall-to-wall beatbox joints? Risky business, right? The idea that someone could make a record with just a larynx and a mic—substituting gulps and glottal stops for

synths, snares and record scratches—boggles the mind. Amazingly, *The Human Element* works; in fact, it dazzles. Click Tha Supah Latin's reprise of his old joint "Contact" is the album's highlight, but the most innovative track is Kris Jung's "Liquid Butterfly," which incorporates hard rock guitar riffs. Despite a few moments when attempts to mouth old samples sound like superficial experimentation, these "vocal percussionists" mostly use their tongues in creative ways. *Rachel Swan*

LACKLUSTER: REMIXSELECTION ONE Psychonavigation/IRE/CD

Not only does this Finnish IDM wunderkind make icy angelic music himself, but he can possess other people's tracks with laptop-powered clackety percussion and optimistic soaring synth visions as well. And it doesn't really take a full 12 remixes to make this compilation's ethos as clear as a mountain lake. Ninety seconds into his EEDL remix, and your parietal lobe is getting caressed like Pegasus' rainbow-colored mane being stroked by a nine-year old girl. Then he wreaks perfect havoc on an aggressively dissected Lord Fader, and he just keeps on going from there. Overwhelmingly good. *Brion Paul*

NEWSOUNDTHEORY VOLUME 3 BasicLux/US/CD

Atlanta, GA, is the spaghetti junction of the South: a lot of inroads, but not so many outlets. This led James and DeAnna Cool, who record as Madison Park, to create their own label, BasicLux, and compilation series, *NewSoundTheory*. Along the way, the Cools crystallized their philosophy of a nu-lounge "sound lifestyle," which references the aqueous forms of boutique house and contemporary "dad jazz" equally in a gently emulsifying chemical process producing disco-tinged downtempo. It's the dry vermouth of music—it mixes in unobtrusively but would likely be missed if absent. *Volume Three* of the series sees tracks by regular contributors Chris Brann, Lumiere, Goldlust, Kemit and GrooveOholics, plus samba-funk and prismatic prog-house standouts by Solu Music and Mudfish. *Tony Waz*

RASCO PRESENTS THE MINORITY REPORT Pocketslnted/US/CD

Enjoyable throughout, if not ambitious, Rasco's *The Minority Report* features artists whose crisp beats and funky turns-of-phrase ensure their status in the top one percent of underground rappers. It's a compilation with a tangible sense of rootedness, especially on "Just Like That," in which Mikal regales Bay Area heads with shout-outs to regional stars Mystic Journeymen, Kevvy Kev and Hobo Junction. Otherwise, the best tracks are "Hustla" by Prophet, who will seduce you with his looped piano, "Respect My Team" by Planet Asia, who will seduce you with his triumphant delivery, and "It's a Wrap" by Jean Grae, who will just seduce you, period. *Rachel Swan*

RIDDIM DRIVEN: CHECK IT BACK VP/US/CD

Ricky "Mad Man" Myrie takes a successful stab at a rave-style riddim with *Check It Back*. He starts with sweet synthesizer chords, high-pitched tinklings and beguiling fake string swoops, then cuts in a strong, catchy bassline and funny, cartoon-like bubble noises. Where Lenky Marsden would have taken this rhythm into darker dub terrain (see *Time Travel*), Myrie keeps it major key and sunny so the rhythm lends itself equally well to love chat or battle talk. The lineup of vocalists is stellar, with Bounty Killer's take (the title track) turning it into an addictive, swinging sing-along. *Rob Geary*

SHIMON PRESENTS RAM RAIDERS: THE MIX Ram/UK/CD

Hot on the heels of the sixth EP in their Ram Raiders series, Shimon steps up to the decks for a blazing 50-minute rinse-out that's sure to leave you breathless. With past, present and future cuts representing, Shimon works familiar family members like Moving

Fusion, Andy C, and Sparfunk into the mix as well as showing some love to new-school stars like Night Breed and Sub Focus. A swirling, dizzying ride from the get-go, amateur trainspotters may have a hard time keeping up as Shimon flips it every chance he gets, layering beats, double-dropping mixes, and generally working those decks into a frenzy. *Chris Muniz*

SOULFUL BEHAVIOUR 2: MIXED BY DJ FRENZIC Defunked/UK/CD

Despite the lineup of notable characters—Calibre, D.Kay & Epsilon, Total Science and Laroque—the second compilation in this series falls as flat as the vocalist's pitch on Carlito's "Music is My Life." The main fault here isn't DJ Frenzic's mixing skills, it's the fact that the compilation's source material is uninteresting. The same platter of vocals, horns and breakbeats are served up in the same way every liquid funk—as this jazzed-up subgenre of d&b is known—compilation does it. There may be

one or two decent tracks, but amid this shuffle of mediocrity they are sadly lost. *Jenn Marston*

SUMMER SESSIONS 2004 Milk & Sugar/GER/CD

This is, without a doubt, totally five-story-staffed-with-restroom-attendants megaclub house music; semester-in-Europe house music; halter-topped, quick-strobed, smoke-machine hands-in-the-air house music. Which is to say, big dumb fun, slightly ritzy and totally common. It reminds me of the black velvet couches those places always have—nice because velvet rocks, but nasty because everyone and their drunk ass has passed out on 'em at some point. If blandly cheery mega-music is your thing, you'll get it in mega-spades here. I'd rather go sulk in a dark corner and pine for weirdness laced with a little complexity and a lot of grime. *Selena Hou*



MORGAN GEIST

UNCLASSICS: OBSCURE ELECTRONIC FUNK & DISCO 1978-1985 Environ/US/CD

Italo-disco is the current rage among New York's record weasels, but the fetish doesn't extend far outside a coterie of DJs for whom Cerrone is a household name. *Unclassics* is one of the first attempts to take the genre from a whisper to a scream, and it's Metro Area's Morgan Geist who's rightfully in charge of spreading this gospel. Don't worry if you don't like wailing diva vocals or "Y.M.C.A."-style theatrics; the Italo sound strips disco down to its barest essentials: synthetic handclaps, outer space dub effects, cowbells, laser sounds, and sparkling bleeps. You barely miss the human voice in this selection—the machines contain enough glittering champagne *bon mots* and satin-slinky basslines to render debaucherous lyrics obsolete. Still, for all its dancefloor intentions, *Unclassics'* selection is surprisingly restrained—it's suitable for a prance under the disco ball, but wouldn't be out of place at the depraved 4 a.m. afterparty either. *Vivian Hoat*

TECHNO GUEST REVIEWS: EWAN PEARSON

If you were a college student in the UK in the late '90s, Ewan Pearson is definitely the grad student you would have had a crush on. He's a former lecturer in popular music (at the University of East London, 'ya heard) and he's got a master's in philosophy and cultural studies, but these days he's better known as the darling of the techno scene. Scottish-born, Berlin-based Pearson was formerly known as Maas (thanks to his firing 1997 album, *Latitude*), but these days you'll recognize him as the remix don, having flipped it and reversed it for labels including Classic, Kompakt, Bitches Brew, Azuli and hometown stalwarts Soma, and for artists including Ladytron, Playgroup, Slam and Goldfrapp. We asked Pearson to peer into his collection, and give us some thoughts on future music. *Vivian Hoat*
www.somarecords.com

SWEET LIGHT ABUSATOR *Freak 'n' Chic/FRA/12*

Eight-and-a-half minutes of arpeggiated techno mayhem from a new French act that could be one of the records of the year, if initial audience reaction is anything to go by. Huge like Alter Ego's "Rocker" and Vitalic's "Le Rock 01"; in fact like anything with "rock" in the title, presumably. *EP*

ROMAN RUGEL *GEHT'S NOCH? Cocoon/GER/12*

Tucked away on the multi-volume compilation heralding the launch of Sven Väth's Frankfurt über-club (or grand folly—the jury's out...) The Cocoon, this is an annoyingly catchy piece of bumpy electronic bogle house from one half of Alter Ego. Quite daft, but once the riff squirrels its way into your brain there is no escape. *EP*

ALEX SMOKE *CHICCA WAPPA EP Soma/SCOT/12*

An exciting new act from the Soma fold, Mr. Smoke sounds like he's been spending more time in Berlin than Braehead [a part of *Glasgow—Geography Ed.*]. Intricate funky techno that doesn't forget that moving arses is its prime objective. *EP*

MARTINI BRÖS *SHE'S HEAVY METAL (DJ NAUGHTY RMX) Poker Flat/GER/12*

Filipo Moscatello remixes one of the standout tracks from the Martini Brös album in a galloping Italo style with a large dose of acid thrown in for good measure. A sure-fire crowd pleaser with a great vocal. *EP*



HEADROOM *SCHIZOAFFECTIVE Evil Deception/GER/12*

After an extensive two-year sabbatical, the Headroom boys are back to obliterate bass bins and ignite ritual dance clubs across the globe. Heavy saturation of hypnotic sixteenth-note synth loops atop South America-inspired percussive rhythms can only lead to an ass-rumbling bass line. Brazil meets Chicago. *Praxis*

SVEN DEDEK VS. MARCO POLO *HATE EP Fine Audio/GER/12*

While dark minimal techno can often lead to crowded exit ways, this team twiddles the right knobs to keep folks paying entry. Hues of a sinister mastermind are at work as eerie minor chords and white noise crescendos fuse with intelligently funky lows. A bit on the intense side, but with enough soul to even please the masses. *Praxis*

UMEK *TRUST NO ONE Consumer Recreation/SLOV/12*

UmeK reigns as the world leader in innovative and experimental dancefloor techno, and this stellar release confirms his well-deserved title. Shuffled kicks, throbbing toms and LFO-modulated square waves shift in time between 4/4 and 3/4—a confusing yet congenial method of manipulation. Plus, this master was cut so hot that it could possibly play through a line-level preamp. *Praxis*

THE EMPEROR MACHINE *THE TV EXTRA BAND DC/UK/12*

The third 12" leading up to the debut album finds Andy "Chicken Lips/Big Two Hundred" Meecham in fine form. The A-side title track is just what you'd expect from him: an infectious bassline riding astride simple, functional punky dance beats and a smattering of keyboard shards making like Giorgio Moroder gone mad at Black Ark. B-side "Bloody Hell"'s shuffle will make T. Raumschmiere and Kompakt heads blush. *Alexis Georgopoulos*

DAHLBACK & DAHLBACK *SWEDEN 1 CANADA 0 Turbo/CAN/12*

Jesper and cousin John Dahlback don't push things nearly as hard, but they do get the acid just right, notably on "Naslund's Final Trip," a delectable slice of underground resistance. Also of techno note: Juan Atkins' appropriately titled "Rebound" EP (on Bone's Subject Detroit imprint) lives up to its name in fine style, especially on the rubbery glissando of the title track. *Alexis Georgopoulos*

MISC. ROCKET KONTROL *Sender/GER/12*

Germany's Misc. outrocks Alter Ego's "Rocker" with "Rocket Kontrol," a massive electro-techno contraption sporting yo-yoing bass and power-drill acid sequences. On the remix EP, Pan/Tone, Matthias Schaffhäuser, and Frank Martiniq take the edge off the brutality, reconfiguring Misc.'s low-end into tight-fisted funk; Schaffhäuser even adds disco strings. Areal's Basteroid, though, ups the intensity with a grinding mix that throws off sparks. *Philip Sherburne*

SCOTT LOGAN *D1ASPIORA 1 D1aspora/IRE/12*

Detroit and Berlin have long been connected through techno. With *D1aspora*, a sublabel of Ireland's D1 (distributed by Submerge), Dublin asserts its own sister-city relationship with the D. Scott Logan's four tracks offer a subtle, melodic take on Motor City techno with plenty of punch. "Cigling" and "Gronk" are classic exercises in syncopated machine rhythms and gentle squeal, while "One Chord" and "Lia Fail" explore resonant sub-bass and minimalist clatter. *Philip Sherburne*

DJ DEX EL CAMINO *Motech/US/12*

More hotness from the middle of America. DJ Dex presents classic jacking and warping on "El Camino," fortified by a tribal, drummy remix, but flip for the real stash: "Electrixol"'s acid techno breaks and the sinister leads, insistent groin kick, and psychotic Satan vocals of "Lowrider Psycho." Bad trips never sounded so good. *Vivian Hoat*

MINORU *TAKE IT TO THE FIRE Madskipper/JPN/12*

Listen up! Ministry's AI Jourgenson has been reincarnated as a Japanese punk rocker named Minoru, who is going to rip you a new one over guitar fuzz, rough kicks and nasty electro bass. (Skip the "Reflex" B-side, unless you like Lords of Acid). For more Japanese technocrash/electrotrash, check Co-Fusion's "Hot! Hot!," a pounding hard house-ish number saved by persistent laser beams and a catchy breakdown that mimics Trans-X's "Living on Video." *Vivian Hoat*

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**HOUSE GUEST
REVIEWS:
DJ GENESIS**



Few DJs can boast they got their start in the United States Air Force, but then again, there are few artists like Detroit's Monica Lockett, who spins and creates music as DJ Genesis. She's founder of label imprint Subgroundz Records, featuring Lockett-produced tracks such as "Tonight Is The Night" and "Hush"; organizer of the all-female DJ tour Set It Off (with Heather Heart and DJ Heather); and the former web designer and graphic artist for Detroit's Submerge crew. Yet, Lockett says she feels like she's only just beginning to develop herself as a successful producer, DJ and label owner. Lockett solidified her belief that she could pursue music professionally in Detroit by working for Submerge, playing various clubs and completing three subsequent appearances at the DEMF/Movement Festival (2001, 2003 and 2004). Inspired and taught by fellow Airman and DMC '98 champ DJ Rags, Lockett began to score gigs in Washington D.C. after leaving the military in 1997. Lockett's always been into a wide variety of music, evidenced by her 1998 jazzy debut single "Agents Adrift" for Eighteenth Street Lounge Records. "Working at Submerge turned me on to techno. But I like lots of stuff: R&B, garage, broken beat, some 2-step and even reggae." *Tim Pratt* www.djgenesis.com

WOMEN ON WAX PRESENTS DIVINITI FIND A WAY King Street/US/12
Produced by Detroit's Pirahna Head, "Find A Way" was originally released on DJ Mixx's Women On Wax imprint. Heard in sets from DJs including Little Louie Vega of Masters At Work to Danny Krivit. In fact, Krivit liked it so much he remixed and reedited the track and re-released it on New York house label King Street Sounds. Pirahna will be releasing some dope tracks for KDJ's Mahogany Music soon. *DJ Genesis*

DOC LINK BACK AND FORTH EP Modulate/US/12
Chicago producer Doc Link's experience shows in his extensive catalogue of remixes for artists such as Maxwell, George Benson (on the flip side of this record, a scintillating remix of "All Night Long") and Chaka Kahn. This Chaka Kahn remix has a great buildup and really stands out. The mix, the production, the feel—*bellissimo!* A classic Chicago-style floor-banger! *DJ Genesis*

**BOOKA SHADE VERTIGO
Get Physical/GER/12**
So many of Berlin electro-house label Get Physical's 20-odd singles are so ridiculously good that my puny lingo can't really do their naked boogie justice. Still, whisper in a friend's ear that you heard Booka's "Vertigo," and his claps made you think of ass-spanking and the analog bass vibrated you to orgasm. Pick up DJ T's undulating "Time Out" and come twice. *Mikki Mantle*

**TROYDON EVERYDAY PEOPLE EP
Grab/US/12**
South Africa's Troydon is one of the funkiest house producers on the planet. His instrumentals are packed with weird noises, jerky samples, clever drum variations, drop-outs aplenty and ample elongated bass riffs. All three tracks on the "Every Day People" EP feel like riding a banana-seat Schwinn bike down a bumpy dirt road while tuning in Derrick Carter's radio show on short-wave. *Hector Cedillo*

**TUSSLE DISCO D'OR
Rong/US/12**
Tussle's debut album, *Kling Klang* (Troubleman Unltd.), is the ghost of King Tubby mixing Can-style thunk with Liquid Liquid's disco syncopation. Ben Cook of Triangle Orchestra polishes this gem up, while Rong Records partner DJ Spun takes the groove in a grittier, dub-disco direction. Rong's other new release by The Drunk re-edits a storm

of incredible bongo beats and spartan disco instrumentals. Grab a bottle of Glenlivet and join 'em. *Tomas*

**JAMES DUNCAN NIGHT TRACKS
Le Systeme/US/12**
Channeling the raw futurism of Detroit, James Duncan serves up three sonic invitations to a special kind of basement party. You can almost feel the sweat dripping from the low ceiling here, as the dancers take cues from the driving Rhodes, soul vocal snippets and classic drum sounds. The erstwhile Metro Area trumpet man brings on the Afro vibes on the B-side, and the hands go up! *Roy Dank*

**DJ OJI HE'S MY DJ
King St./US/12**
Carolyn Victorian's muse is the DJ, a profession for which Oji is legendary in Baltimore and D.C. The producer creates a driving African rhythm with extra claps and a howling saxophone, clearing the way for Victorian's exaltation of the man behind the decks. *Tomas*

**DJ GREGORY SOLARIS
PIAS/FRA/12**
Joined by Next Evidence mainstay Michael T, Parisian DJ Gregory, well known for his part in the Africanism project, offers up a plate of old-school disco dub that Larry Levan would've played the shit out of. It's a bit jazzy for the f-punk crowd, but for those who like to stray from the middle it may pull its weight. *Alexis Georgopoulos*

**BREAKS GUEST
REVIEWS:
LEE COOMBS**



If you don't know by now that Lee Coombs likes to party, just look at his release names: The Over Indulge EP, "The Freak," "Two Men on A Trip." Furthermore, one suspects the title of his latest album, September's *Breakfast of Champions* (Finger Lickin'), does not refer to Wheaties. But seeing the world in a twisted way has been good for Coombs' breaks tunes, whose extremely low frequencies and twisting tech house edges whisper "warped mind and acid house background." Coombs is touring the US this month with a well-stocked arsenal, so we asked him what's finger lickin'. *Tim Collins* www.fingerlickin.co.uk

D. RAMIREZ SLAVE (MEAT KATIE & D. RAMIREZ RMX) Lot49/UK/12
Originally released on D.Ramirez's own label a couple of years ago, this track has been picked up by Meat Katie's Lot49. Deep and throbbing hypnotic breaks with a serious techy edge—very squelchy, very fat and guaranteed to rock any dancefloor. I know! I've seen what it does! *LC*

**CHRISTIAN J & DYLAN RHYMES PARTY PEOPLE
Distinctive Breaks/UK/12**
Seriously tough breakbeat from two of the scene's most solid producers. With a Leftfield-style synth loop that you never get bored of, and drums as hard as Mike Tyson's mum, you can't help being pulled along by this monster track! There's a tasty hip-hop sample thrown in to top it all off, making this one of the best crowd reactors of the moment. *LC*

NU BOY NU FUNK STROLL Thrust/UK/12
Nu Boy is a new pseudonym for Glen from Future Funk Squad, and this one's a deep breaks groover that would fit into any time of the night. With a Future Funk Squad remix on one side and the original on the flip, this should cater for most tastes in breaks. Big rolling funk percussion with a quality techy edge. Solid! *LC*

**JAMMIN GO DJ RMX
Bingo/UK/12**
The "Go DJ" remix keeps the tempo and DJ-friendly arrangement of the original breakstep anthem, switching up the bass pattern and adding half-time d&b fills but not letting up any of the pressure. Flip for the gimmicky "Uptalking," a mash of accelerating and decelerating distorted bass no doubt inspired by the sounds of Zinc's Audi going from 0 to 100. *Star Eyes*

**MCMILLAN & TAB WORK IT
In-Flight/UK/12**
Crazy build-ups and minimal, piston-pumping techno breaks await on "Work It," which is the kind of thing you want to play at 5 a.m. when trying to give a room full of LSD expats from the goa trance scene a collective spiritual orgasm. And if that doesn't work, you could try the Plump DJs' tweaky "The Soul Vibrates," or its B-side, "Bullet Train," and hope a flying dreadlock doesn't scratch your cornea. *Star Eyes*

**SHYSTIE MAKE IT EASY
Network/UK/12**
Four interesting vocal treatments here for rough female UK garage MC Sheisty, who earned her crown with a comeback record to Dizzee's "I Luv U" and is presently ruling the kingdom. Davinche turns in two minimal, horn-heavy steppers that combine *Drumline* vibes with R&B. MJ Cole's mixes are much nicer, with cut-up old

school garage flavors, bouncy bass stabs and interesting synth work. Still, I can't help wishing for something dirtier. *Star Eyes*

MONDIE MONDIE white/UK/12
Don't play Mondie's two new whites in the club, unless you want everyone to huddle in the corner crying. In fact, I'm almost tempted to file these under experimental. Over a minimal grime riddim that sounds like someone repeatedly braining you with a Nerf mallet, MCs Napa, Flirta and God's Gift flex pure darkness—all crew beef and putting suckers six feet under. And God's Gift takes it with some bashment roughneck chat from the Bounty Killer school. *Star Eyes*

**QUALIFIDE ROUGH AND TOUGH
Prolific/UK/12**
Qualifide flies the flag for old school 4/4 garage flavors from the Todd Edwards era. If you like rubber band-snap basslines and vocal stutters, check "Rough and Tough" and the better B-side "Badman." Shuffling, slow simmering vocal house awaits on their "Just Being Fooled" for the Hot Flush label (with a tasty broken beat stormer on the flip), while they make a tasty speed garage mincemeat of 3 of A Kind's cartoon pop tune "Baby Cakes" (Relentless). *Star Eyes*

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HIP HOP GUEST REVIEWS:
CHIEF XL

I have evidence that Quannum Projects DJ and Maroons/Blackalicious member Chief XL (Xavier Mosley) only sleeps two hours a day: he produced Blackalicious's 2002 album *Blazing Arrow* (MCA), followed quickly by a Fela Kuti remix on the 2002 comp *Red Hot & Riot*, then finished September '04's Maroon's album *Ambush* (Quannum) and worked on a forthcoming Quannum Fela mixtape. All in a day...and another day's work for an artist who has been advancing hip-hop music since the late '80s.

Mosley and his homie Gift of Gab helped form the SoleSides Crew at UC Davis with Lateef, Lyrics Born and DJ Shadow. Then he honed his beat craft in Blackalicious, whose single "Swan Lake" quickly became a Cali-and-underground-hip-hop classic. Before long UK hipster imprint Mo' Wax recognized game and released Blackalicious's "Melodica" EP in '95, and their debut *Nia* finally dropped in 2000. Since then-between executive production with Portland's Lifesavas, a Quannum Projects world tour and readying tracks for Blackalicious's spring 2005 record *The Craft*-no sleep. Thankfully, The Chief devoted some of his precious waking hours to lacing us with his fave jams. *Tomas*
www.quannum.com

LTG EXCHANGE CORAZON Disco International/US/12

I was originally put up on LTG Exchange through a record trade. Back in '95 I told a friend that I needed a record called *Malatu of Ethiopia*; he found it and hooked me up. A couple of years later he calls and says "Remember that *Malatu* record I gave you? Well, I'm looking for this 12" called "Corazon" by LTG Exchange." Recorded in 1974, the record is a Latin disco version of the Carol King song with a six and a half minute extended version that has three breaks and breakdowns throughout-not available on the full-length (the LP version is three minutes). *CX*

ZION I ACT RIGHT Slate/US/12

I respect artists who forge their own path and make music on their own terms. With two full-length LPs under their belt and another in the works, Zion I has returned with another solid 12-inch (due out fall 2004). On "Act Right," Zion, Miss Marianna and Encore all come through with conviction over a soulful soundscape that producer Amp Live has become known for. *CX*

TONY ALLEN WITH AFROBEAT 2000

NEPA (NEVER EXPECT POWER ALWAYS) Wrasse/NIG/LP

Known as lead drummer and musical director for the legendary Fela Kuti's Africa 70 band, and also session drummer for many greats including Roy Ayers and Manu Dibango, Tony Allen is a legend in his own right. Polyrhythmic and multilayered, "NEPA" is a classic vibraphone-tinged track recorded in 1984 and is in a similar vein to the Roy Ayers collaborations (i.e. "Africa Centre of The World"). *CX*

NIAMAJ THE VIBE Plug Label/US/12

Brooklyn native/Bay Area transplant Niamaj nails it with his cool, laid-back rhymes over warm, jazzy guitar loops and homegrown beats and scratches from producer/DJ/label head Kero One. On "The Vibe," his train of thought makes a nostalgic stop or two, but deftly avoids the dogmas that all too often plague underground hip-hop. "Yagotta" chronicles Niamaj's endless laundry list of life's must-dos, and the Raindrops remix features Kero's subtle Fender Rhodes work. *Ross Hagg*

FRONTLINE FEAT. E-A-SKI UH HUH
Infrared Music Group/US/12

Hot on the heels of the Bay Area breakout hit "What Is It?" is "Uh Huh," the second single from New Bay affiliates Locksmith and Left, better known as Frontline. Once again, E-A-Ski and CMT are handling production, and once again, it's a West Coast slumper. Ski's punchy instrumental suits their back-and-forth, battle-ready delivery perfectly. *Ross Hagg*

SOUL POSITION INHALE Fat Beats/US/12

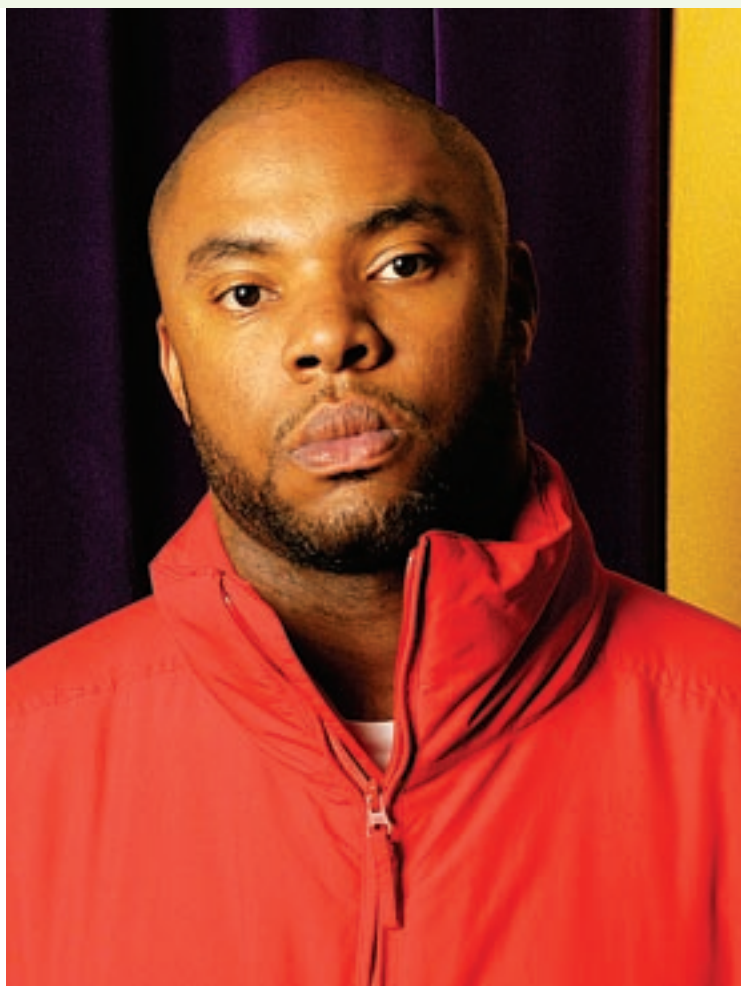
Fat Beats gets serious with Soul Position's "Inhale." MC Blueprint practices perfect breath control and lets it all out over rock beats chopped up by RJD2; the remix is even heavier and on "Right Place, Wrong Time" the lines between indie rock and indie rap are further blurred. Elsewhere on Fat Beats, MC J-Zone's "Friendly Game of Basketball" is a hilarious potshot at celebs who think they can ball. *Ross Hagg*

LIGHTHEADED NEVER SQUARE
Basementalism/US/12

No rain in Portland, only heat! Lightheaded celebrates Northwest hip-hop creativity on "Illuminate," over 9th Wonder's MPC-tastic beat. Producer Muneshine's no slouch either, livening up "Never Square" and "Blink of an Eye" with strings, tablas, horn sweeps and other punchy samples. Sounding like Pharcyde covering Organized Konfusion, Lightheaded restores hip-hop's legitimacy. *Tomas*

ICON THE MIC KING INDIEINBURNS

North Philly's Icon comes stomping, ready for rhyme combat, trooping into battle along with producers Blockhead (Ninja Tune), Black Panther and Zeeby Zeeb. But despite the boasting, only "IndieInBurns" with the venomous C-Ray Walz will penetrate his opponents' Kevlar vests. But check out "Change Form" (EV) by Chicago's Modill with its superb horn-blasting soul loops and liquid lyrics-this is what they mean by lethal. Common would approve-peep this future classic. *Tomas*



IN STORES NOW

**DRUM & BASS
GUEST REVIEWS:
DJ FRENZIC**



Frenzic is best known as the editor of the world's longest running drum & bass magazine, ATM (formerly Atmosphere). But just because he's got some talent with the red pen, don't ignore his crowd-rocking abilities. Fourteen years since being captivated by the culture at the Rainsance raves of the late '80s, Frenzic has played around the globe—including Malaysia, New Zealand and Russia. He recently mixed the liquid funk compilation *Soulful Behaviour 2* for his pals at the Defunked label, and don't forget to check his production debut, a driving remix of Jo's anthem, "R Type." Just back from Java, we pulled a jet-lagged Jay Frenzic out of bed to tell us what tracks are rocking the jungle. *Vivian Hoat*
www.atm-mag.co.uk www.defunked.co.uk

POTENTIAL BAD BOY YOU'RE MINE True Playaz/UK/12

Potential is one of Jungle's originators, and is certainly making a comeback—this track is gonna put him back on the map. Some lover's rock-esque vox runs throughout with a cool little skanking b-line to boot. This is one of them ones where you can't get the b-line out of your head. *Frenzic*

JUJU SAHARA RUN Liquid V/UK/12

I got sent all the tracks from Juju's forthcoming EP on Liquid V, and it was a tough choice to grab just one. "Sahara Run" drops Calibre-esque dubby vibes with some of that old skool jungle bass that's gonna have necks twitching. I'd like to see more of this dirty, stinking drum & bass/jungle flava. America doing us proud! *Frenzic*

J MAGIK & WICKAMAN GOOD VIBES RMX Infrared/UK/12

The dynamite pairing of J Majik & Wickaman continues to cause havoc! This is a remix of one of my favorite releases from the duo—"Good vibes" vox running through-out with rollin' bass tones and plenty of hi-hats to keep the energy maximum. It may not be as intricate as some productions, but fuck it. It's good quality dancefloor d&b, and that's what I am all about. *Frenzic*

**BLACK OPS SIREN DUB
Random/UK/12**

Leave it to the UK garage boys to come with some dope dancefloor drum & bass and the middle finger. "Siren Dub" lays vocals from a popular dancehall anthem over a simple roller that is neither too techy nor plagued by absurd bass. We're talking lots of mileage here, folks. "Vyce" combines Ed Rush & Opty bass with tweaky Conflict touches and comes out retro. Nice one, boys. *Star Eyes*

**CYBIN NO MORE LIES
Trouble on Vinyl/UK/12**

Bristol duo Cybin, who also run the Lockdown label, kicks off with a Highlander-style slice of rolling menace called "No More Lies," with a thick deformed bassline and tasty amen fills. "Code Red" boasts a spooky, spine-chilling cinematic intro but descends into leaden, murky breaks. *Star Eyes*

**MIKROB & BUNGLE
TEMPESTADE
Nu Directions/UK/12**

Brazilian bad boys Mikrob & Bungle treat us with bongo-beating "Tempestade," which flows with waves of uber-low sub bass and interjections of saucy guitar licks to "LK"-like effect. "Sunday" pushes the vibe into trance and bass territory with proper choppage on the amens after the second drop. Watch out Marky & XRS! *Ryan Romana*

**THE ROWDY TIME EP
Barcode/UK/12**

Yes, Raiden's "44 Calibre Killer" sounds like four monkeys farting in a basket, and Chase & Status so overdo it with the reece and amens that you wish the time machine's dial wasn't stuck on 1998. Nonetheless, Evol Intent does some wicked things with the tramens on "Horns & Halos" (which might as well be on the *Doom 3* soundtrack), and Resonant Evil's "Hells Angel" is a methodically nasty virus you should try to catch, if you like it hard and pounding. *Rock Soj*

**LEON SWITCH HIDE THE TEARS
Metalheadz/UK/12**

Reinforced refugee Switch presents a swirling miasma of drums and *Exorcist* synth washes, driven by a classic Metalheadz tons-of-drums approach that will have you throwing the goat. Flip for a Kryptic Minds remix that's further driven by teeth-chattering sub bass and a scary girl whispering, "hide the tears." *Star Eyes*

**BFS STICK UP
Biological Beatz/UK/12**

No surprise that a pair of MCs—Fatman D and Shortston—runs this label. Both "Stick Up" and flip "Dedication" are resolutely jumpy rollers, the kind that tear up the rave, putting the fun back in jungle. Flashback to '96 here, but with better production quality and monster bass. *Rock Soj*

**FUTURE JAZZ LABEL PROFILE:
BITASWEET**



West London's Bitasweet imprint was formed in 1998 as an outlet for the hybrid music of the Bugz In The Attic collective—who numbered a whopping nine at last count. Since its inaugural release, the BitterSweet EP, it has steadily gained a rep as one of the most pioneering labels within the broken beat/future jazz scene, putting out key anthems such as Bugz's "Zombie 2003," Kaidi Tatham's "Betcha Did" and Seiji's "Loose Lips." Such tunes—characterised by their stuttering beats, fusionistic threads of jazz, soul, funk and Afrobeat, and emotive vocals—have consistently raised the bar for other labels.

"We wanted to make gritty raw soul music with that rough contemporary edge," says label boss/Bugz member Mikey Stirton of Bitasweet's origins. "We wanted to mix any style of music that had a common thread with the scenes that the different Bugz had come from: hip hop, house, drum & bass and so on."

Things are busy at Bita HQ, with new titles in the works including *Afronaught Presents: Phuturistic Dancin' Mission 2* and the *Got The Bug* remix LP. But the genre that was so underground when the imprint started is now a global phenomenon. This means more competition and a stronger scene for some, but perhaps some needless saturation as well. For Stirton, it's indeed a bittersweet dilemma: "It can only be a good thing if there are more people getting into our sound and trying to promote it, but what's missing at the moment is the new kids coming at it from a different angle." *Paul Sullivan*
www.bugzinthattic.net

**JOINED FORCES
Switchstance/GER/12**

Tunes from Germany's Switchstance sound similar to those on Ninja Tune, Stereo Deluxe and Grand Central, and are made by a cast of unknowns who could well be the next Mr. Scruff, Runaways or Funky Lowlives. In other words, break-heavy beats, jazzy solos and old school hip-hop samples sprinkled throughout bombs by Kabinjak, Deela and, um, Protassov? For more, check SS's masterful comp, *Fantastic Freeriding 2*. *Tomas*

**JENNIFER JOHNS
HEAVYELECTROMAGNETIC...
Nayo Movement/US/12**

Oakland native Jennifer Johns will inevitably draw comparisons to Jill Scott, and possibly to fellow Oakland Youth Chorus alumnus Goapele, but be clear: Johns is her own artist. From the opening 808 kick of "Heavy" to the spoken word/d&b of "Do You Believe In Love" to the doleful ambitious cover of Sade's "Cherish The Day," Johns proves that she's an original voice. *Ross Hogg*

**MARK DE CLIVE-LOWE
TIDE'S ARISING EP
Antipodean/NZ/12**

UK-based Kiwi MdCL has earned a prolific following, working with luminaries such as MAW and a who's who of the West London massive. This four-track sampler is the long-awaited follow-up to his Six Degrees debut and features great vocal work from Bembe Segue and MC Capitol A. Swinging broken rhythms are tightly woven, with de Clive-Lowe's magic fingers dancing across the keys. *Velanche*

**MOONSTARR DETROIT
Sonar Kollektiv/GER/12**

Records from Canada's Moonstarr sound lo-fi, like they were made on the cheap with the first pieces of equipment a kid could lay his hands on. But who cares? In a club they kill—they're to-the-point, nasty, brittle, bouncy and hard-hitting. "Detroit" will please fans of Henrik Schwarz and Pepe Braddock with epic-length synth-framed gloss. *Franz Carr*

**LAL BROWN EYED WARRIOR
Public Transit/CAN/12**

"Brown Eyed Warrior" from LAL (producer Murr and vocalist Rosina) comes consciously correct on this environmentally-minded tune. Moonstar remixes the track with heavy beats in his own inimitable style, and Murr relies on both snare and guitar on a re-edit of "B.E.W. Epilogue." Cool. *Velanche*

**SOMATIK REALLY R EP
Twisted Funk/UK/12**

4Hero collaborator Brad "Somatik" Munn's second Twisted Funk EP rolls out four deliciously innovative broken tunes, with "Chromatik" standing out as sprightly keys float on top of roughneck d&b basslines while a vocal intones "God is in your mind." Self-improvement in the dance! Meanwhile, Izzi Dunn's latest sassy vocal throw-down "Out of My Hands" (Fireworx) sounds best when in the hands of national treasure Kaidi Tatham, who brings the funky synths and tight syncopations. Hotness!! *Mike Bee*

THIS IS WHAT RADIO SOUNDS LIKE...

BZZT...BABY-BABY-BABY...BZZT...MY POOR EMO HEART IS BROKEN IN 187 PLACES...BZZT...RAAAH-RAAAH-RAAAH GITTIN' KRUNK UP IN HEAH...BZZT...HEY NOW, YOU'RE A FRATBOY, GET YOUR DRINK ON...BZZT...MURDER-MURDER-MURDER, KILL-KILL-KILL...BZZT... UNNGH, I'M A REFUGEE FROM THE DISNEY CHANNEL ALL GROWN UP. HOW YA LIKE MY LO-RISE JEANS?...BZZT...

(REPEAT 13 TIMES DAILY)

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**LEFTFIELD GUEST REVIEWS:
ALEX PATERSON**

The Orb's Alex Paterson is considered a pioneer of the more subdued, chill-out side of dance music. His dub-based, whimsical and sometimes psychedelic electronic music has often been viewed as a delightful contrast to more bombastic dancefloor fodder. After a stint as a roadie for Killing Joke, Paterson kick-started his musical career in the late '80s with Jimmy Cauty (who went on to found The KLF). As chill-out DJs, the pair opened for the likes of Paul Oakenfold. Paterson and Cauty quickly emerged as musical partners in The Orb, debuting with the "Kiss EP" in 1988.

1990's sprightly "Little Fluffy Clouds" firmly entrenched The Orb's jovial, over-the-top melodies and perky beats, and was followed by a masterpiece debut album, *The Orb's Adventures Beyond The Ultraworld*, in 1991—one of the true classics of contemporary electronic music. Throughout the '90s, Paterson paired up with a variety of producers (Andy Weatherall, Kris Weston, Andy Hughes, Thomas Fehlmann), and explored the outer reaches of expansive ambient music via albums such as *U.F. Orb* (1992), *Pomme Fritz* (1994), *Orbus Terrarum* (1995) and *Orbivision* (1997). The Orb's most recent release, *Bicycles & Tricycles* (Sanctuary), is a solo effort, but it once again centers on capricious, upbeat melodies and offbeat subject matter. Paterson is staying busy, releasing a new single, "Komplott," on Kompakt. In early 2005, Paterson will reunite with Cauty and others for an album as the Transit King. *Tim Pratt*
www.theorb.com

PAUL ST. HILAIRE DR.'S DEGREE False Tuned/GER/12

Formerly known as Tikiman, Paul St. Hilaire's "Dr.'s Degree" is a slow builder that has to be played very loud to be felt fully! The vocals are slowed down with a heavy Basic Channel-type groove, accented by seductive vocals that rise the most high. The main mix has a third world harmony in the chorus, while "Rootsy" is a rock tune for lovers. *AP*



**THE CONGOS CONGO MAN (CARL CRAIG EDITS)
Honest Johns/UK/12**

If you like reggae, this is a must. The first side sounds similar to the original, but done with a Casio and edited wonderfully, making for a bouncy, groovy and sexy sound. The flipside reminds me most of the Kiss 98.7 FM mix of "Last Night A DJ Saved My Life." *AP*

LUCIANO CAPRICCIOSA EP Bruchstuecke/SWI/12

"Madre" has the madness-inducing vocals of the year in Irish and German—a sweet tune from the Fatherland. The remaining three tracks, "Frankie," "When The People Will Come," and "Frankie" feat. Lea Polhamer, are the best. Hearing is believing—all smooth sounds to calm your mind. *AP*

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**WHOMADEWHO HAPPY GIRL
Gomma/GER/12**

Hellbent on world domination, Munich's Gomma gang expands its ranks with two new signings this autumn. Copenhagen's WhoMadeWho brings a brazen live sound to the fold with the ecstatic punk-funk of "Happy Girl." Charged guitars battle it out with a rolling rhythm section, and the only winner here's the dancefloor. Tomboy, meanwhile, mans the post-acid house front on the first outing of his numbered, eponymous series. *Roy Dank*

**MICHAEL ROSE & RANKIN JOE
DEEPER ROOTS
M/NETH/10**

There's no stopping Ryan Moore's Twilight Circus. Following a recent spate of 7" singles on the M-offshoot Fleximix (with cuts by toaster Rankin Joe and Luciano, plus versions) comes the truly sweltering "Deeper Roots" EP from Michael Rose and R.J. Rose's "Throw Some Stone" is a cautionary lament, with his earnest vocals hovering over Moore's foundation dub. Also on M—Rob Smith remixes Rose's "No Burial" inna ol' skool-jungle stylee. Sirens wail! *Tomas*

**PROEM SOCIALLY INEPT
Merck/US/12**

Austin's Proem (Richard Bailey)—a strong contender for supplanting the British stronghold on trippy IDM à la Boards Of Canada (but without the brimstone and treacle)—turns it up with the remarkably compelling "Socially Inept." Merck certainly ain't no slouch, considering Aphilas' equally high quality EP, *Instrumentally*

III. Part hip-hop, part jazz-funk, part "hell yeah," this Helsinki-based duo crafts gorgeous melodies with lush strings and echoing guitar samples. *Tim Pratt*

**J.O.Y. SUNPLUS
DFA/US/12**

Abandoning the disco punk groove for a moment, DFA's most delightful moment in some time comes from former Major Force West members J.O.Y. and collaborator Yoshimi from The Boredoms in the form of a Sugarcubes/Slits-style jam that edges out the DFA remix for sheer panache. Also new on DFA, defunct trio Pixeltan gets the posthumous death disco treatment which we'll be hearing too many times this year. Then again, it could be much worse. *Alexis Georgopoulos*

**BEAT PHARMACY NEW DAWN
Deep Space/US/10**

Dub is spouting from New York's sidewalks like camouflaged wildflowers, their beauty noticeable only after you're already engulfed. Beat Pharmacy's debut on François Kevorkian's Deep Space label is circa '94 Rockers Hi-Fi mixed by Basic Channel's Maurizio. Call it *subtledub*, and brilliant. Going different directions, David Last's trippy "Badlands" (Agriculture) disobeys all dub's rules (like the music used to) and wrests African Head Charge beats from a fidgety computer. *Derek Grey*

**ANTENNAE SILENT
Botanica Del Jibaro/US/12**

Miami's Richmond Heights resident MC Stres takes us into his claustrophobic reality—a serpentine world that he observes from his room via pirate satellite TV. His evocative prose dismantles the myths of the United States one brick at a time over beats by Maneuver and Counterflow associate Induce. On side-label Rice

& Peas, Doc Nuke.com's "Petroleum G-String" 7" presents shifty IDM and chaotic breakcore for all-night renegade warehouse parties. Bring your posse. *Tomas*

**DER ZYKLUS BIOMETRIC SYSTEMS
Clone/NETH/12**

Der Zyklus blurs and explores identity on this teaser single for their forthcoming *Biometry* (DUB) album. Rumored to be a collaboration between Heinrich Mueller and Dopplereffekt's Rudolf Klorzeiger, "Biometric ID"'s android voiceover ("encoded inside a microchip are the patterns of my fingertips") is a creepy component to a plodding, future-paranoid soundtrack, sparsely arranged with willowy synths and slowly arpeggiating rhythms. George Orwell is smiling from above. *Tomas*

**IRRADIATION A PLACE FOR CRAZY PEOPLE
Temp/GER/12**

If Prefuse 73 and Akufen decided to collaborate on an IDM-electro EP, they would sound exactly like Vienna, Austria's Patricia Enigl (a.k.a. Irradiation). Six tracks showcase versatile clipped, stuttering beats, oozing bass synths and tight melodic ribbons that seal this confident package. Also on the IDM breaks tip, Kyma & Uberdog's "Emergency Series 1" (Varial) is highly recommended. *Derek Grey*

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CLOTHING, MUSIC, ACCESSORIES





It was after the third or fourth Cape Cod at the Cincinnati Int'l Airport that I finally started to slow down and recap this hectic summer of 2004. There was, of course, the bike ride to LA, there were buffalo burgers and drunken bowling with the Mile High House crew in Denver, some serious basement digging with On-U-Sound's M.A.D. in Toledo, and a wicked grand slam Indians victory over the Blue Jays and the wild "\$4.99" party with Jugoe, Onit and their gang in Cleveland.

There were barefoot hotdogs and Old Style tall-boys at the North Ave. Beach after some morning scores at the Jazz Record Mart in Chicago, a lovely day soaking in Lake Berryessa with Jantine B and her crew of hotties, and an all-too-short rock and hip-hop set at the Boogie Boutique Fourth of July blow-out just down the street from XLR8R World Headquarters. I could go on and on—the public nudity and pool parties, the infamous Lil' Bastards nights at House of Shields, or the vast sums of money spent on Crown Royal lately, but—believe it or not—there was some music involved:

1) J. BOOGIE'S DUBTRONIC SCIENCE LIVE! IN THE MIX (Om/US/CD, 2xLP) My man J.Boogie shows his full range on this beautifully mixed CD for Om. Catch his two new tracks "You're the Murderer" and "Purple Perpendicular Phonics" on 12" out now.

2) DIPLO FLORIDA (Big Dada/US/CD) This one-half of Philly's Hollertronix team came through and ripped up a guest spot at the Tunnel Top over the summer, but you'll find a bit headier material on his debut, *Florida*. A couple bangers, but also plenty of strings and piano coupled with minimal electro for a deep, mature vibe.

3) DJ QUEST "BULLETPROOF'S BACK" FEAT. EDDIE K/"MUTATIONMANN (AMPUTATED MIX)" (white/US/12) Just what you need at 2:30 a.m. upon leaving the bar—a carload of Space Travelers piling out of a beige Nova with mugs of booze and trouble on their mind. Look out!

4) TUSSLE "DISCO D'ORO" (Rong/US/12) Driving funk-rock with just enough sex and bleeps to turn any party out. Cocktails for everyone!

5) AZEEM SHOW BUSINESS (Bomb/US/CD) This cat's got one of the illest flows around, and one of the hottest live shows you'll see anywhere. Check his latest album with production from Paul Nice, DJ Design, Fanatik and more. Good shit throughout.

6) FREDDIE CRUGER FEAT. RAPPADON "BAP YO HEAD" (Jugglin'/SWE/12) AKA the much-lauded Red Astair, this is the jazzy hip-hop-tinged second release from Raw Fusion offshoot Jugglin', and well worth tracking down for the Up Hygh remix and the up-funkin' "Boogie Down Stureby" on the flip.

7) DJS ARE NOT ROCKSTARS PROMO (white/US/CD) Whenever Ms. Superstar comes to town, it's gonna be a party, and this mash-up collaboration with Alexander Technique is a pretty fair sample of how she brings it live—triple and quadruple layerings of new/old/future electro-funk and hip-hop classics. Hotness!

8) NUCLEAR FAMILY "THE NEW SINGLES?" (Ruff-Noxious/US/12) III NYC collective, rocking a variety of styles and having fun all along the way. Check the innovative "Raw" or the Bob James bounce of "What We Gonna Do." Sweet.

9) BUCC ROGERS "TRANSMITTING LIVE FEAT. KOOL KEITH" (Mad Seven/US/12) This was waiting for me in a paper grocery bag on my front door when I got home from one of this summer's trips. "Weird," I thought, "people are leaving me groceries now?" Then I see my man Tom C. rocked the production on the title cut, and his brother Diet did the cover art, and it's a hot little 12"! I still don't know how the hell it arrived on my doorstep, but I'm playing it.

10) FANTASTISTA "SAMBA DE GILLES" (Jazid/NOR/10) Just a cool summer samba for bars, boats or patios. Get yourself a fruity drink and a dancing partner, homeboy.

11) V/A PARTY KELLER VOL.1 (Compost/GER/2xLP) Another fine compilation covering the full funk spectrum, from '70s reggae to disco to new wave electro to classic hip-hop, Florian Keller digs deep and comes with the rarities and unknown cuts.

12) SHARKEY "SUMMER IN THE CITY FEAT. JEAN GRAE" (Babygrande/US/12) Deftly working a Skatalites loop ("Reburial," I believe?), Sharkey lays a well-woven backdrop for Jean Grae to drop her NYC tales.

LUCKY 13) HIP HOP PEACE AND UNITY FEST (Inebriated Rhythm/US/DVD) By all accounts, a beautiful day in Boston in 2003, featuring over two hours of pro-shot live performances by KRS-One, PMD with DJ Honda, Ed O.G., Shuman, and many more. With an audience of over 40,000 strong, complete with graf artists and b-boy circles, the festival hopes to expand in coming years.
redwine@xlr8r.com

THE BLAST ZONE BY DJ ENKI



MORE FRONTS, STUNTS AND BOOM-BAP FROM A CERTIFIED HIP-HOP JUNKIE.

Over the years, we've been subjected to an awful lot of verbiage attempting to explain or define what hip-hop is. Sure, it's the four elements (or five elements, or 12 elements, depending on which self-appointed hip-hop historian you're talking to), it's music, it's a culture, it's Chuck D's weird habit of doing shit like calling Russell Simmons "Hustle Scrimmons," it's a way for non-badasses to feel like badasses, it's what KRS-One eats for breakfast, it's marketing urban angst to suburbanites with gobs of disposable income—it's all of that stuff. But has anybody ever really tackled what hip-hop is in terms of day-to-day life? For example:

HIP-HOP IS...

- having your phone (cell or home) cut off for bill nonpayment.
- having extension cords snaking all over your pad so you can power your turntables, stereo, Def Jam neon light sign, etc.
- driving to a gig, then spending at least half an hour circling the venue's block looking for a parking space.
- *The Iron Chef* (the theme song of which should be "Step in the Arena" by Gangstarr. "I choose Iron Chef Chinese!" (Music: "Step up! Ste-step up! Step up! Ste-ste-ste-ste-step up!")
- back pain from hauling record crates around and hearing loss from spending so much time in noisy-ass clubs.
- having everybody on BART look at you funny because you're beatboxing along to the music in your headphones.
- the crippling inability to keep the word "yo" out of your speech.
- addressing your friends with a single letter: "What up, B?" "Kick the ballistics, G!" "Big E in the house!"

But you know what hip-hop used to be but really isn't so much anymore? Making sure both sides of your 12-inch are bangin! Nowadays, if you even get a B-side on a 12-inch, it's some lame throwaway track or possibly the "remix" of the song, which means it's the same beat, the same hook, the same everything, only now you get an offhand verse from Busta Rhymes, Snoop Dogg, and somebody from down south who could be reasonably described as "crunk." Thanks for nothing, you yokels. If you want blueprints on great double-sided 12-inches, why not check out DJ Enki's Top Three Double-Sided Singles:

1) DOWNTOWN SCIENCE "Out There But In There"/"This Is A Visit"/"If I Was" This one gets an extra nod because you get not two, but three quality tracks, complete with instrumentals (Sam Sever keepin' it funky!), remixes, and the whole nine. Terrific bang for the buck here.

2) SUPER LOVER CEE & CASANOVA RUD "I Got A Good Thing"/"Gets No Deeper" Both songs are super hot. You even get the bonus bassline remix of "Gets No Deeper" with that deliriously bouncy Dee Felice bassline. You get instrumentals of both tracks (both bangin'). And you get two acapellas from an MC who sounds dope over any beat you throw under his verses. What's not to love?

3) FRESHCO & MIZ "We Don't Play"/"Ain't U Freshco?" One slow, headnoddic groove. One 120bpm b-boy funkfest. Both beats ridden to perfection by a quality MC. Cuts by a world-champion DJ. Instrumentals for both tracks. A bonus cut featuring Freshco ripping it over the always-great Graham Central Station drum break. One sick single.

Did I completely forget about an excellent double-sided single or some good day-to-day definition of hip-hop? Hit me at dj_enki@hotmail.com and school me!



"XLR8R is the shit... like havin' no toilet paper and wipin' your ass with your hands."

-Beans, artist and general player



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XLR8R *incite*

PHOTO Jessica Miller

IN THE STUDIO ALCHEMIST

His beats are like sorcery, especially when Nas or Prodigy is spittin' venom on top. So how did a scrawny white kid from LA get down with QB's illest MCs? Words: Tomas Palemo Photos: Jessica Miller

“THE DEFINITION OF A WINNER IS SOMEONE WHO'S NOT AFRAID TO LOSE.”

Alchemist won't tell me his real name, but he doesn't have a problem being called Al. I figure he's either an overly private guy, on some don't-tell-nothin' code-of-the-streets-incognito shit, or maybe he's got a female stalker. The latter's a real possibility for this clean cut, parka 'n' cap sporting producer who's made music for hip-hop's elite, including several beats on Nas' *God's Son*, Mobb Deep's *Murda Muzik*, Dilated Peoples' *Neighborhood Watch* and joints for Jadakiss, Cypress Hill and Cormega.

Al got his start as a rapper in the short-lived group The Wholigans before turning to production. Recently some drama broke out prior to the release of his first solo album, *1st Infantry* (Koch)—which features Nina Sky, M.O.P. and The Lox—when websites hiphopmusic.com and hiphopblogs.com were bombarded with album promotion spam emails that linked to the raw XXX Beverly Hill Pimps N Hos portal. The hip-hop sites banned Al in response. I guess that's viral music promotion in the porn age for ya, and not unexpected from a kid who grew up in LA and went to high school in Beverly Hills.

But what about them hot beats? We hollered at Al just before he sat down to lunch with Prodigy of Mobb Deep, and uncovered some tasty secrets of this down-to-earth crate diggin' dude.

Are you based in New York now?

Yeah, [going on] six or seven years now.

Where did you grow up originally? Weren't you down with Soul Assassins?

I grew up in LA. I'm still down with Soul Assassins, got the ring on my finger to this day. You know [tattoo artist] Mr. Cartoon, Muggs, B-Real—that's straight family.

Were you doing a lot crate diggin back in LA?

At first I was a rapper [with The Wholigans], so I discovered all [crate diggin'] through [House of Pain's DJ] Lethal, The Baka Boys and Muggs; that's where I got my first schooling. We'd go out on the road with House of Pain and Muggs would come back with *boxes* of records and he would go through them on the bus with his turntable. He'd be like “Check this beat out,” and Lethal would school on what bands had better productions—he put me on to what years records were good, producers, which instruments to look for. I'm still diggin to this day. It's a way of life.

What's your favorite piece of equipment in your studio?

The Ensoniq ASR 10—that's like my brother, father and mother. That's my best friend. It's unconditional love with me and that machine because it always works for me. I like to spend my energy on creating, instead of mastering a new machine...I guess I'm stubborn and it might limit me sometimes, but anything I wanna pull off I can do with the ASR and ProTools.

What other keyboards or gear do you use?

I mess with the Moog Voyager. It's a new Moog that they made, and its MIDI compatible, so you can connect it to other outboard gear. Sometime I mess with modules, but I just dabble. I just use my same formulas of how I chop up a record. With vinyl sometimes you'll find a sample immediately; sometime you'll have to listen to 100 records before you find something—it's a gamble. But the definition of a winner is someone who's not afraid to lose.

You're from the West Coast, but started producing the cream of the East Coast, and Queensbridge artists in particular, during the height of the so-called East-West beef. How'd you pull that off?

I think I'm testament to the fact that the East/West thing was media hype. It's crazy when I look back at it, 'cause there's no way I could've willed it to happen. I kind of followed my dreams and the path that was chosen for me. But as crazy as it sounds, I got down with Mobb Deep through Cypress Hill. Muggs hooked me up. I moved to New York, and [Muggs] was working on the *Soul Assassins 2* album, and he got Mobb Deep on it, and introduced me to [their crew] Infamous Mobb. Muggs asked me to hook up a beat for them. It took me a long time to be accepted by Mobb, 'cause they're self-contained and they don't really let people into their circle. We definitely clicked over music. Just like I didn't grow up on Cypress Avenue [in LA], I didn't grow up in Queensbridge, but I think respect recognizes respect. That's the power of hip-hop as well. *1st Infantry* is out now on Koch. www.alchemistbeats.com.



FADING OUT ANALOG

I have a love-hate relationship with technology. We have the most powerful computers on our desktops, but we haven't found a cure for the world's chronic food shortages. Our priorities are a bit skewed sometimes. As hardcore Rastafarians like to say "take-way-knowledge-y" (technology) a mash-up the place!"

That doesn't stop me from getting seriously amped about Numark's suite of digital DJ mixers, the **Numark DXM01**, **03**, **06** and **DXM01USB**. These four mixers incorporate 24-bit signal paths and a variety of hot digital treats. The DXM01 is your on-the-cheap basic model whose main digi-feature is a Sub-Bass Synthesizer that looks at the bass frequencies of the song you're playing and retunes them crisply. From there you can control the bass intensity to just grind along or shake the foundations down. Along with its steep three-band EQ, mic input and noise-free digital faders you're gravy in a club full o' turkeys.

Next, the DXM03 is for the nervous EQ tweekers. A blue-lit window display glows with a 12-column spectral EQ, and different arrangement options allow you to cut whatever micro-frequency you want out of a particular song. This makes it easy to wipe the vocals or snare drum out of a track for smoother transitions. Oh yeah, this model comes with a cross-fader reverse switch and RCA record-out so you can tape your set.

The 06 adds 12 freakin' effects (that even work through the mic channel). Vocode your mic chatter, or tap an effect with the beat of the track and play Scientist with a live dub mix. You thought the Pioneer mixers had dope effects? Check this shit out.

Lastly, you wanted to mix songs from your computer in with the vinyl? The DXM01-USB's dual USB ports can suck the living .aifs (or MP3s, WinMedia etc) out of your porn-cluttered desktop folder, and jettison them into a DJ set. No drivers needed for OSX or WinXP users, and this 10" sized cube comes with the same 24-bit digital sound, reverse switch and sub-bass analyzer as its siblings. Now, let's put on the biggest party the world has ever seen and use the resources to cure famine. *Derek Gray*

Numark DXM 01 MSRP: \$270; DXM 03 MSRP: \$270; DXM 06 MSRP: \$350; DXM 01USB MSRP: \$350; www.numark.com



YOU THOUGHT THE PIONEER MIXERS HAD DOPE EFFECTS? CHECK THIS SHIT OUT.

HELL-BENT

The sequel to the largely popular **Drumkit From Hell**, **DFH2** is a great resource for producers looking to add some authentic drum playing to their compositions, but who lack the funds or time to hire out both a studio and a drummer. Meticulously played and recorded over the course of a year by Meshuggah drummer Tomas Haake, DFH2 features nine mono and two stereo outputs and a wide variety of mic positions including snare top, snare bottom, kick drum mic and overheads with all the natural bleed between them—they've even gone so far as to adjust tom and kick drum sounds accordingly if the snare is disengaged.

Far from being merely a tool for the reproduction and imitation of a live drummer, however, the interface for DFH2 is based on Native Instruments' Kompakt, meaning that each individual sound is tweakable, twistable and tunable.

Really, the only limitation on DFH2 is that (powerful as it is) it tends to be a bit of a drain on the CPU, especially as the tweaks and twirls add up—but you can always bounce and come back to make adjustments later. All in all, East West has provided a solid and worthwhile addition to any producer's arsenal. *Alex Posell*

East West Drumkit From Hell 2 MSRP: \$129.95; www.soundsonline.com

A GREAT RESOURCE FOR PRODUCERS LOOKING TO ADD SOME AUTHENTIC DRUM PLAYING TO THEIR COMPOSITIONS.



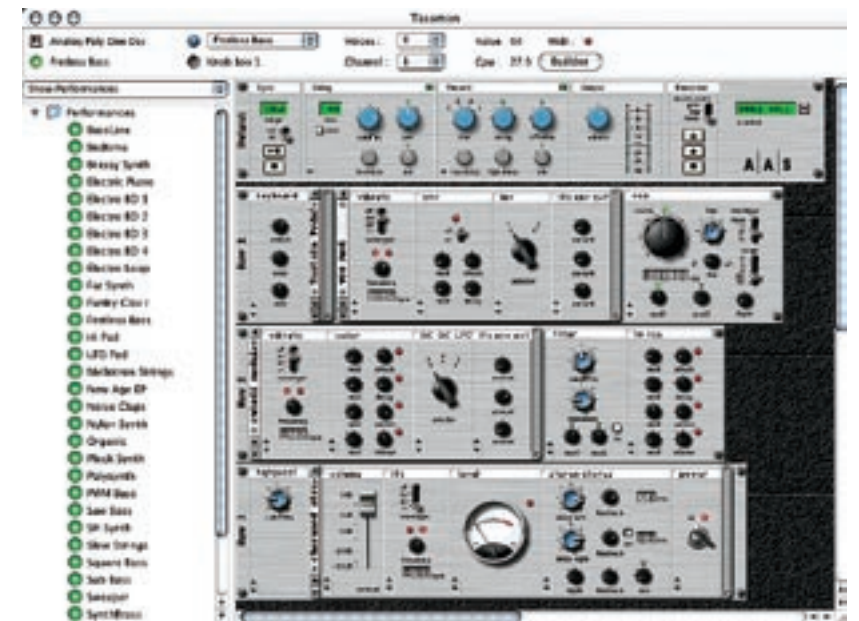
4.0 ON THE FLOOR

The **Applied Acoustics** team has released a new update to their popular **Tassman** virtual instrument with powerful additions for your audio arsenal. Tassman 4.0 is a modular virtual instrument designed to physically model sound, an approach much more aurally accurate (and heavier on your processor) than most software companies care to endeavor. The resulting sounds are extremely realistic or surrealistic, depending on what direction you want to take.

The plucked and bowed instruments are notably realistic, as are the drums (there is a modular sequencing feature). Users of previous versions will find the same attention to sonic detail, and a slew of new features. The most important new features are a "performance mode," enabling more streamlined live performance, and an audio in. You can now use the Tassman as a VST effects processor or real time audio input processor (i.e. send your drums or guitar through a modular synthesizer or an acoustic resonator).

There are also weird new presets, instruments and sound libraries, a new output stage and improved algorithms for better handling/performance. If you don't have access to a vintage clavinet, an electrified snare drum, a 20-foot long piece of steel to bow or an alien spacecraft, **Tassman 4.0** comes in quite handy in the studio. *Jease Terry*

Applied Acoustics Tassman 4.0 MSRP: \$349; www.applied-acoustics.com



TURNING THE KNOBS ON THESE BABIES IS A REWARDING EXPERIENCE.



WISH YOU HAD BERNARD PURDIE ON CALL? HERE'S THE NEXT BEST THING.

SWEET HARMONIX

With the **16 Second Digital Delay**, **Electro-Harmonix** has proved it is possible to create a sonically and visually attractive guitar pedal that's rugged as a tank. Users of the famous pedal include Vernon Reid, Robert Fripp and Adrian Belew, but don't let that mislead you into thinking this monster is just for guitar geeks.

Running a send from a drum, vocal or keyboard track often produces spectacular results, and can greatly warm up a digitally thin mix. Turning the knobs on these babies is a rewarding experience, especially when you're used to dragging a mouse.

The sound, as users of the Memory Man will know, is smooth and rich, and the reissue improves on the sonic quality of the original. With the addition of a controller pedal, the options for live looping are endless, and features like reverse can make for some very trippy live sessions.

Before you purists insist on shelling out for the original pedal, take note of some very hot new additions: you can sync this pedal with any MIDI drum machine, and in addition to double speed and half speed settings, you can create timings in between. When you really push it, you can get a loop up to four minutes long. A minor but important point: unlike digital plug-ins, the EH pedal can slow down the *input* signal. Now I understand how we got to the Ableton Live era. *Jease Terry*

Electro Harmonix 16 Second Digital Delay MSRP: \$990; www.ehx.com

SMOOTH OPERATOR

Oftentimes, spending loads of time searching for source material and then chopping, filtering, tuning and laying out your frequencies and effects can bring the ever-elusive "vibe" of a day's work to a screeching halt. For those looking to add high-quality rhythm tracks into their music without spending hours futzing about with the minutiae of obscure breakbeat particulate, **Zero G's Operating Table** should provide quick gratification.

Operating Table makes short work of this process by providing both excellent breaks in a wide variety of styles and the means with which to completely destroy them. The beats are conveniently lined up first by tempo (and there is a wide enough range to suit anybody's needs) and then by style. House producer? Not a problem. Want something quirky and weird? Got it. Wish you had Bernard Purdie on call? Here's the next best thing.

The user has access to the breaks in their pre-composed forms, most of which are quite good, or may use a set of conveniently chopped and laid out pieces to play with. With a bare minimum of effort, and a maximum of mood-saving time, the aspiring beat mangler should find plenty to love in this specialized yet sophisticated bit of software. *Alex Posell*

Zero G The Operating Table MSRP: \$129.95; www.zero-g.co.uk



ACROSS THE TRACKS

Evolution occurs through demand, and Novation has sussed the need for a quality audio interface to develop your computer-based music production studio. Their **Novation Speedio Trackmaker** is an audio/MIDI hardware device that offers a simple USB solution for all your digital interface needs. This unit simply bypasses your stock 1/8-inch I/O (in-out) soundcard and adds pristine high definition sound input with two balanced XLR/1/4-inch combo sockets.

Each input channel contains a low-noise, high bandwidth audio preamp with over 70db of phantom power headroom, allowing the connection of a professional condenser microphone without the need of any additional amplitude boost. The included ASIO (audio stream input output) driver enables rapid communication between the Speedio and your sequencer/recorder (i.e. Cubase, Logic, Soundforge, Sonar, etc.), eliminating most of the audio latencies derived from recording and playback.

In addition to a noiseless headphone jack (assignable as stereo or mono), your session can be monitored from the input signal or the output signal with a single hardware knob, making ease of overdub painlessly uncomplicated. The MIDI busses supplied for the single MIDI input and output appear to shuttle quite fast as well.

For a laptop musician or a desktop performer, the single USB connection frees your machine of unwanted cabling by eliminating a PCI slot (desktop) or a PCMCIA slot (laptop cardbus) for your audio and MIDI connections. Fewer devices always prove to be more efficient for your processor in the long run, and Novation built their unit on this fundamental principle. Packaged with Cubasis VST, Ableton's Live and Novation's own Bass Station VSTi plug-in, this component package compiles all you need to begin designing music with the insertion of a single USB cable. *Praxis*

Novation Speedio Trackmaker MSRP: \$299;
www.novationmusic.com



FEWER DEVICES ALWAYS PROVE TO BE MORE EFFICIENT FOR YOUR PROCESSOR IN THE LONG RUN.

SOMETIMES CUTTING DOWN ON YOUR OPTIONS MAKES FOR BETTER OUTPUT.

AS SKINNY AS AN OLSEN TWIN ON EX-LAX



EDIROL GIVES YOU THE SKINNY

At just one and 3/16 inches thick, the new **Edirol Slim PCR-M1 MIDI Keyboard Controller** is almost as skinny as an Olsen twin on Ex-Lax. While they don't boast girth, these keyboards are heavy on features. With 25 keys, these are aimed directly at laptop users and owners of miniature home studios (i.e. people who live in San Francisco or New York City).

Hook the PCR-M1 up via a standard MIDI port or USB (which it can also draw power from). With eight knobs, a V-Link port, six buttons, two slide wheels and two pedal ports, it's easy to control many features of your computer audio setup. While it may not be the best choice for a keyboard player used to a standard piano's action, this keyboard is perfect for the gigging laptop user, or just people who like cute, tiny things.

Slip this keyboard and a laptop into one of those M-Audio tote bags and still have room to fit three or four issues of *Vice*...err...*XLRRR* magazine into it. Edirol's new Slim PCR-M1 MIDI Keyboard Controller is the new welterweight champion of the MIDI keyboard controller arena. *Jeossie Terry*

Edirol Slim PCR-M1 MIDI Controller MSRP: \$310; www.edirol.com



XPRESS YOURSELF

Sometimes cutting down on your options makes for better output. With their **Xpress Keyboards** bundle, **Native Instruments** has found a sub-niche market in the software synthesizer arena. Each of the three keyboards (B4, Pro-53 and FM7) is aimed at musicians who like to sit down and make music. Producers who like to spend time on the intricacies of software synthesizers—changing patch cables, rerouting effects and otherwise twiddling knobs—should look elsewhere.

The B4 offers up stunningly realistic emulation of the classic Hammond B-3 organ, while the FM7 takes on the classic '80s Yamaha synthesizer, and the Pro 53 emulates Sequential Circuits' Prophet 5. All three instruments are pared down versions of NI's full software, but the sound quality remains the same. While many soft synths will clog up your memory if a heavy preset or more than one instance is used, these three are extremely stable. This is useful in a live setting; unlike many virtual instruments, you can actually make sounds without fear of crashing. *Jeossie Terry*

Native Instruments Xpress Keyboards MSRP: \$119.00;
www.nativeinstruments.de





TBC: MARK CRISPIN MILLER

WHEN IT COMES TO EXPOSING POLITICAL HYPOCRISY, THIS AUTHOR PICKS UP PEN, TYPEWRITER AND VIDEOCAMERA

WORDS: SCOTT THILL. IMAGE: JESSICA MILLER

What a difference a regime change makes.

One presidential term ago, America was riding high on an economic boom, Fox News hacks weren't the official mouthpiece of the government, and media critic Mark Crispin Miller had barely a couple years on the NYU faculty under his belt. Although his 1988 classic *Boxed In: The Culture of TV* was already mandatory college reading for those looking to understand the curious intersection between television and advertising, it wasn't until the late '90s that Miller would be able to become a citizen of the Gotham metropolis that houses the engines of both. For a guy looking to bail on Baltimore, it couldn't have come at a better time.

"I'm at NYU primarily because they offered me a job, but I had to get away from Johns Hopkins," Miller admits. "I would rather be in New York than anywhere else. It offers opportunities to talk to a far larger public, since it is the media capital of the United States and home base also to countless foreign journalists."

But NYC also boasts a vibrant performance culture, one that fosters activism and entertainment with equal aplomb. Miller seized upon that by stepping out from behind the desk and into the spotlight. In 2003, he staged an off-Broadway show at the Cherry Lane Theatre called *Bush R Us*, an interrogation of the president's curious twists of phrase—and their pathological origins—that riffed on Miller's national bestseller, *The Bush Dyslexicon*. This year, he's kept up the heat with *Patriot Act*, which recently completed a full run at the New York Theater Workshop. According to Miller, none of this would have happened so easily in another city.

"Being in New York City has definitely helped me branch out into theater," Miller says. "*Patriot Act* will continue during the Republican National Convention and weekly until the election—if there is one. But more importantly, being in New York has helped me connect with some very talented, experienced people working with documentary film, in the case of *Patriot Act*. All of which will help me put out a movie version of the show this fall."

For a taste of what to expect at a presentation of Miller's *Patriot Act*, interested politicians should check out the author's latest W.W. Norton release, *Cruel and Unusual: Bush-Cheney's World Order*, a scathing indictment of not just the fascist tendencies of the neo-cons that run the country but the press that has allowed them to hijack policy and steer it into unnecessary wars and compromised civil liberties.

"*Cruel and Unusual* is a thorough analysis of the political emergency threatening the U.S. and the world," says the author. "The Bush Republicans are an immensely destructive force, in part enabled by the largely gutless Democrats. But it's the U.S. press that we must finally hold accountable for what is happening now. Because we wouldn't be here at the brink today if the American people had been properly informed from the beginning—that is, since the '80s."

Coming from a media critic with decades of experience under his belt, that accusation carries an Apache helicopter's worth of weight. But if Bush, the Democrats and a bought-and-sold press deserve their fair share of calumny, nothing beats the selection of New York City as the location for the Republicans' convention.

"The Bush Republicans detest New York," Miller explains. "Their attitude is basically [the same as disgraced baseball player] John Rocker's. This regime is ardently opposed to everything the city stands for. The criminal negligence of Bush and company helped 9/11 happen in the first place, and then the regime worked like demons to prevent and thwart the 9/11 inquiry. After promising tons of aid, Bush weaseled out of it, so that it took forever for the money to come through. And now the city is routinely short-changed when it comes to anti-terrorism funding. New York gets the same amount per capita as Wyoming.

"Especially since 9/11, and in the shadow of the menace concentrated in the nation's capitol, I see New York as the quintessential American city. To tell you the truth, I feel proud to live here."

Mark's newest book, *Cruel and Unusual: Bush-Cheney's New World Order*, is available from W.W. Norton.

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